CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

WEDNESDAY ▸ APRIL 15, 2026 ▸ VOL: 11 ▸ ISSUE: 270 ▸ PAGES 12 ▸ ₹2.00

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US, Iran likely to hold second round of talks in Islamabad

High-level efforts underway to revive stalled negotiations before ceasefire deadline ends

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is making renewed diplomatic efforts to bring the United States and Iran back to the negotiating table, with reports suggesting a second round of talks could take place in Islamabad by next week. The move comes amid attempts to revive stalled discussions before the current two-week ceasefire ends on April 21.

According to media reports, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, and Army Chief Asim Munir are actively engaged in facilitating dialogue between the two sides. Their efforts aim to prevent further escalation and possibly bring an end to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

The first round of direct talks in 47 years took place recently in Islamabad, involving a U.S. delegation led by Vice President J.D. Vance and an Iranian team headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Despite marathon discussions, the talks ended without a formal agreement, though both sides left the door open for further dialogue.

Sources indicate that preparations are underway for the next round, which may be scheduled soon. However, logistical challenges remain, as Sharif is expected to visit Saudi Arabia and Turkey around the same time.

The ceasefire was announced on April 8, just hours before a deadline set by U.S. President Donald Trump for Iran regarding the Strait of Hormuz. The conflict, which began on February 28, has raised global concerns over economic stability and regional security.

Sharif has reiterated Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, expressing optimism that continued dialogue could yield positive results. He noted that the recent talks helped ease tensions and opened a pathway toward a negotiated settlement.

Drawing parallels with historic agreements like the Oslo and Good Friday accords, Pakistan's leadership believes sustained engagement could eventually lead to a breakthrough and long-term peace in the region.

Iran seeks compensation from five Arab nations

Iran has demanded compensation from five Arab countries, accusing them of enabling "US-Israeli aggression" by allowing their territories to be used for attacks. According to reports, Iran raised the issue in a letter to Antonio Guterres and the UN Security Council President. Iran's envoy Amir-Saeid Iravani rejected claims by Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Jordan, stating they cannot invoke self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Tehran claimed it is the victim of aggression and accused the countries of facilitating or directly participating in attacks, including on civilian targets.

Chinese tanker crosses Hormuz amid U.S. blockade, Iran mocks move

NEW DELHI

A U.S.-sanctioned tanker linked to China sailed through the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, testing a naval blockade announced by U.S. President Donald Trump targeting Iranian ports. The vessel, identified as Rich Starry, crossed into the Gulf of Oman after initially turning back when the blockade came into effect. It later resumed its journey, reportedly declaring a Chinese crew onboard. Maritime data showed the tanker was carrying about 2,50,000 barrels of methanol loaded from the UAE. Iran seized on the incident to mock Washington, suggesting the blockade selectively targets weaker nations. The move also raised questions over enforcement of U.S. restrictions in the region. The development comes amid heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran, with China criticising the blockade as "dangerous," signalling broader geopolitical implications.

Nitish Kumar resigns, Samrat Choudhary to lead Bihar

PATNA

Bihar witnessed a major political shift on Tuesday as long-serving CM Nitish Kumar resigned from his post, paving the way for a BJP-led government in the state, with Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary set to succeed him.

Nitish submitted his resignation to Governor Syed Ata Hasnain at Lok Bhavan in Patna after chairing his final cabinet meeting and dissolving the council of ministers, fulfilling constitutional requirements. His exit marks the end of an era spanning over two decades in Bihar politics.

In a statement, Nitish said he had served the people of Bihar for a long period and decided to step down, adding that he would extend full cooperation and guidance to the incoming government. He highlighted his government's achievements across sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, agriculture, and welfare initiatives for women and youth.

Samrat Choudhary, who has been elected leader of the BJP Legislative Party in Bihar, is expected to take oath as CM on Wednesday, marking the first time the BJP will independently lead the state government.

> **Now the new government will look after the work here. The new government will have my full cooperation and guidance. Even ahead, a lot of very good work will be done, and Bihar will advance a great deal.**
>
> —Nitish Kumar, Rajya Sabha MP

Outgoing CM: Nitish Kumar
Tenure: Over 20 years (Multiple terms)
Successor: Samrat Choudhary
Party Shift: From coalition to BJP-led government
Swearing-in: Expected April 15, 2026

PM Modi inaugurates Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, travel time halved

New corridor boosts connectivity, cuts travel time, strengthens regional economic growth

DEHRADUN

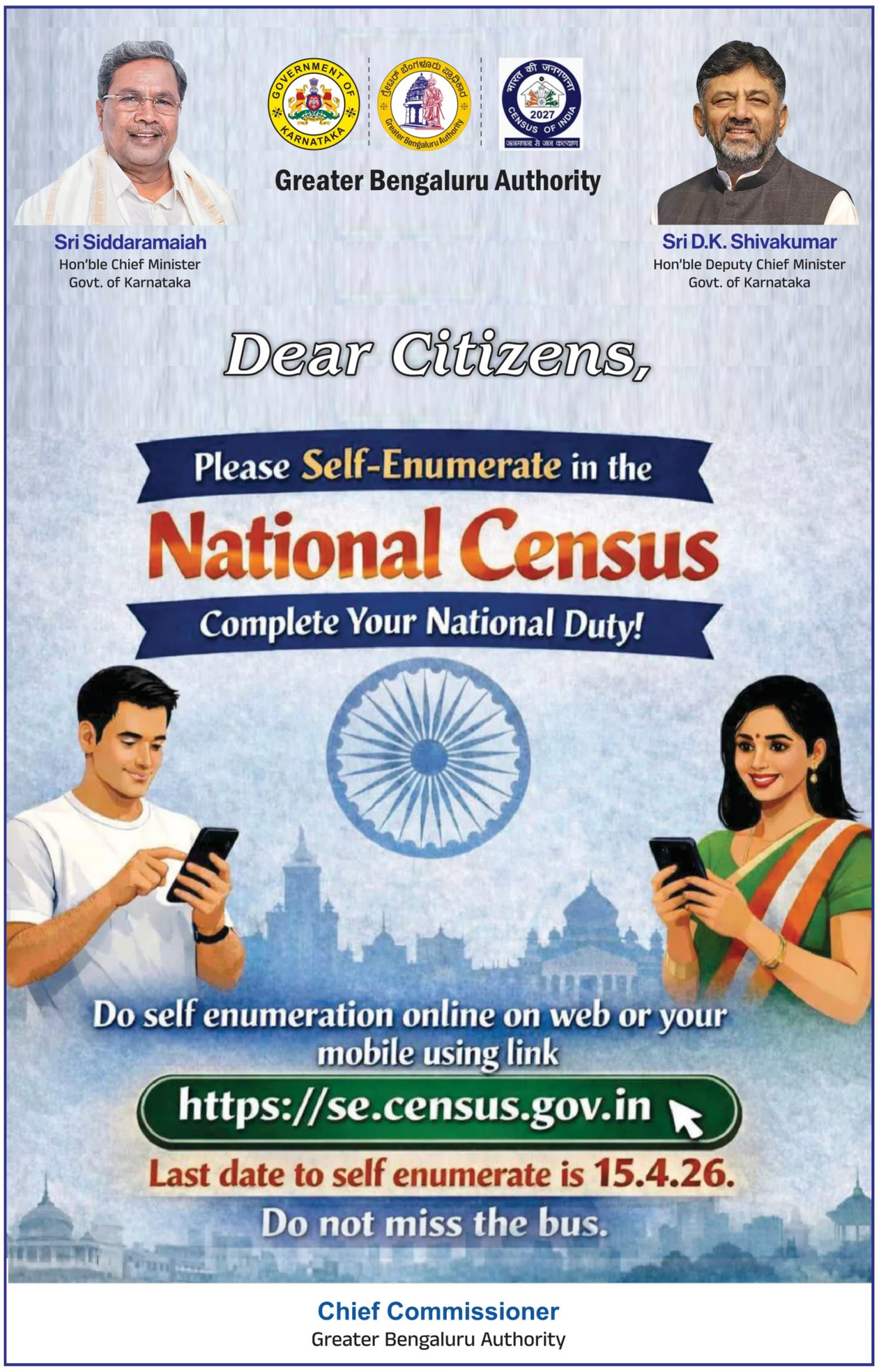
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor, a major infrastructure project set to significantly reduce travel time between the two cities while boosting regional connectivity and economic growth. The 213-kilometre-long, six-lane access-controlled expressway has been constructed at a cost exceeding ₹12,000 crore. Once fully operational, it will cut travel time between Delhi and Dehradun from over six hours to approximately two and a half hours, offering faster and more efficient connectivity across Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

During the inauguration, the Prime Minister inspected the elevated wildlife corridor in Saharanpur and later held a roadshow, receiving a warm response from the public.

The corridor is expected to play a pivotal role in enhancing connectivity between key tourism hubs and economic centres, opening new avenues for trade, investment, and development in the region. It includes 10 interchanges, three railway overbridges, four major bridges, and 12 wayside amenities to ensure seamless travel.

PM Modi pays tribute to Dr B.R. Ambedkar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday paid tributes to B. R. Ambedkar on his birth anniversary, describing his life and work as a lasting source of inspiration for nation-building. In a post on X, Modi said Ambedkar's contributions continue to motivate generations to build a just and progressive society. He highlighted Ambedkar's role in shaping modern India through his vision of equality and social justice.



Hippo linked to vet's death dies of illness

SHIVAMOGGA

Hamsini, a 12-year-old female hippopotamus at Tyavarekoppa Tiger and Lion Safari, which was involved in the death of veterinarian Sameeksha Reddy, died on Tuesday due to illness. Officials said the animal was pregnant but had developed a severe uterine infection, leading to the death of the foetus and eventual organ failure. A team from the Karnataka Zoo Authority had examined the hippo earlier this month. Sameeksha Reddy had died in March after being attacked by the animal while checking its temperature. Authorities have reiterated the need for strict safety protocols.

Constitution by Ambedkar enabled me to become CM: Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that it is because of the Constitution drafted by B. R. Ambedkar that he has been able to serve as the Chief Minister of the state.

He was speaking at the birth anniversary celebrations of Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Award ceremony organised by the Social Welfare Department on the grand steps of Vidhana Soudha.

The Chief Minister recalled Ambedkar's words that as long as the caste system exists, untouchability and social and economic inequality will persist. He said Ambedkar fought throughout his life for the oppressed, marginalised, and deprived sections of society, not just for Dalits but for all those subjected to injustice.

He described the Indian Constitution as one of the finest in the world, noting that it guarantees liberty, equality, and fraternity to all citizens.

CM sacks aide over bypoll row

Siddaramaiah removed political secretary Naseer Ahmed over alleged anti-party activities linked to the Davanagere South bypoll. The action followed an internal inquiry citing support to rebels. It signals strict discipline within Congress amid rising dissent over candidate selection.

Millets, Low-Sugar Foods Mandated in Govt Offices

Under the new guidelines, government departments have been asked to prioritise millet-based snacks during in-house meetings and breaks, along with low-fat, low-sugar, and high-fibre options

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a major push towards healthier workplaces, Karnataka's Health Department has issued a comprehensive nutrition advisory encouraging millet-based snacks, low-sugar foods, and healthier beverages across government offices, meetings, and canteens. The initiative aims to improve dietary habits among nearly six lakh government employees in the state.

Citing the World Health Organization definition of health as complete physical, mental, and social well-being, the department emphasised that proper diet is central to preventive healthcare. Despite India's rich traditional knowledge of nutrition, officials noted that workplace food practices often fail to reflect healthy choices.

Health Commissioner Gurudatta Hegde observed that refreshments served in offices frequently lack nutritional value and do not promote balanced diets. To address this, the advisory recommends fresh fruits, vegetable salads, sprouts, and unsalted nuts such as almonds and groundnuts during meetings and office breaks.

Healthier beverage options such as green tea, low-fat buttermilk, and boiled or filtered water served in glass or steel containers have also been encouraged. For official functions, exhibitions, and conferences, the guidelines call for a broader shift in catering practices. Millet-based dishes are to be included in both snacks and meals, alongside a preference for local cuisine and the use of brown rice instead of white rice.

The advisory further promotes freshly prepared salads and low-sugar fruit juices, preferably sweetened with jaggery. Where non-vegetarian food is served, it recommends limiting consumption to well-cooked lean or white meat.

The guidelines extend to all eateries within government office campuses, mandating the inclusion of millet-based foods and boiled items such as horse gram, chickpeas, and corn. The use of reusable metal utensils has also been stressed to promote sustainability.

Additionally, the department has highlighted the importance of hygiene in food preparation and suggested sourcing ingredients from local cottage industries, self-help groups, prison kitchens, and nutri-gardens. Department heads have been directed to actively implement and promote these practices to enhance overall employee health.

KUPECA Seeks Credit System for Skill Training in Colleges

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The association put forth the demand at a recent meeting to sign the annual consensual agreement with the government

The Karnataka Unaided Private Engineering Colleges Association has urged Visvesvaraya Technological University to introduce mandatory credit points for skill-based training promised by engineering colleges, aiming to ensure accountability and quality delivery.

The demand was raised during a recent meeting held to finalise the annual consensual agreement with the state government. KUPECA representatives argued that several colleges charge students between Rs 5,000 and Rs 20,000 for skill development programmes but often fail to deliver on these commitments.

Manjunath Bhandary, representing the association, stressed that making skill training credit-based would compel institutions to fulfil their promises. "If credits are assigned, colleges will be forced to develop proper skills labs, which are distinct from academic labs. Regular inspections by VTU will also ensure compliance," he said.

The proposal also highlights the need for dedicated infrastructure, including specialised labs for hands-on learning. According to the association, without academic weightage or evaluation, both institutions and students tend to overlook skill development despite its importance in employability.

Responding to the request, VTU Vice-Chancellor Vidyashankar S said the university would examine the proposal. "We will need to deliberate with decision-making bodies such as the Board of Studies and the Executive Council. Once we receive the official resolution from the government, a decision will be taken," he said.

Meanwhile, the meeting also finalised a 7.5 per cent hike in fees for private engineering colleges under the KCET quota for the 2026-27 academic year. Fees at type-1 colleges will increase from Rs 81,800 to Rs 87,935, while type-2 colleges will see a rise from Rs 91,000 to Rs 97,825, excluding university and processing charges.

Although colleges had demanded a 15 per cent hike citing rising salaries and maintenance costs, the government approved only half that increase. KUPECA noted that fees had also been raised by 7.5 per cent last year.

For government engineering colleges, however, there will be no fee hike this year. The university fee remains Rs 10,610, while private colleges can charge up to Rs 20,000 under the 'other fees' category.

QUICK READ

APMC Shop Allotment Row: Traders Allege Massive Corruption

CH News, Bengaluru

Serious allegations of corruption have surfaced in the handover of APMC shops, with traders filing a complaint before the Lokayukta against Agriculture Produce Markets and Sugar Minister Shivanand Patil and APMC Secretary Doreswamy. The complainants have accused officials of granting licenses to unauthorized shops and indulging in irregularities during license renewals. They alleged that several traders secured licenses using fake addresses after paying bribes. Apart from approaching the Lokayukta, traders have also submitted a complaint to the Raj Bhavan, seeking a thorough investigation and strict action against those involved.

CET Ranking: Best of Two PU Scores to Count, Says KEA

CH News, Bengaluru

The Karnataka Examinations Authority has clarified that II PU science students appearing for the Karnataka Common Entrance Test will have their highest marks from Exam-1 and Exam-2 considered for ranking. Executive Director H Prasanna said students attempting the second exam to improve scores need not worry, as the best performance will be taken, continuing last year's policy. The clarification follows rumours that second exam marks may be excluded. CET results will be announced only after both PU exam results are declared. This rule applies only to Karnataka PUC students, not CBSE or ICSE candidates.

HC Quashes Drone Trespass Case against B'luru Firm

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has quashed criminal proceedings against city-based drone manufacturer Newspace Research and Technologies Private Limited, ruling that criminal law cannot be invoked based on speculative attribution of human intent to an inanimate object.

The case was registered in January by Doddaballapur Rural police, alleging criminal trespass after a prototype drone belonging to the firm fell on neighbouring land. The company argued that the lightweight drone, weighing around 6 kg, had suffered a battery malfunction during testing.

In his order, Justice M Nagaprasanna observed that offences such as criminal trespass or acts endangering life require clear human intent or negligence, which was absent in the present case. He emphasised that the criminal justice system cannot be applied mechanically without establishing the essential ingredients of a crime.

The firm also contended that it was operating under a valid research and development licence in a designated green belt area and that oversight of such activities falls under the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, not the police.

Police, however, maintained that the FIR was registered to address public concern following the drone incident. They also claimed that a copy of the FIR had been uploaded on the department's website.

The court rejected this argument, reiterating that the law mandates providing an FIR copy directly to the accused without undue delay. Justice Nagaprasanna noted that merely uploading the FIR online does not fulfil this legal obligation.

He directed all police stations to strictly adhere to the requirement of furnishing FIR copies or complete details to the accused, warning that any deviation would invite departmental action against responsible officers.

The ruling underscores the need for careful application of criminal law in cases involving emerging technologies and reinforces procedural safeguards for the accused.

Pub Overbilling Row: Consumer Forum Orders Full Refund

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A city pub has been pulled up for overcharging customers, with the consumer court directing it to refund the entire bill amount along with compensation and litigation costs, terming the act an unfair trade practice.

The case dates back to January 1, 2025, when 30-year-old PC Sravan Kumar, a resident of Ramamurthy Nagar, visited Secret Story Bar & Kitchen in Indiranagar for a New Year lunch with friends. According to the complaint, the group was provided a menu listing prices for food and beverages, but the final bill reflected higher charges than those printed.

Kumar alleged that when he questioned the discrepancies, the staff threatened him, forcing him to pay the inflated amount. He later issued a legal notice and filed complaints with the Legal Metrology Department, citing overpricing and unfair practices.

Subsequently, Kumar approached the consumer court, alleging deficiency in service. The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission heard the case ex parte after the restaurant failed to appear.

The commission, comprising President Vijaykumar M Pawale and member V Anuradha, identified clear instances of overcharging. A Litchi Blush listed at Rs 295 was billed at Rs 325, Diet Coke priced at Rs 140 was charged at Rs 160, and two bottles of Budweiser Magnum were billed at Rs 540 instead of Rs 480. Additionally, a 10 percent service charge was levied on the total bill, apart from GST.

The commission observed that such practices violate guidelines issued by the Central Consumer Protection Authority, reiterating that menu prices already include service components and that any extra charge beyond listed prices and applicable taxes is illegal.

Holding the pub guilty of unfair trade practice and deficiency in service, the forum ordered Secret Story Bar & Kitchen to refund Rs 2,708 with 8 percent annual interest from January 1, 2025, until payment. It also directed the establishment to pay Rs 5,000 as compensation and Rs 2,000 towards litigation costs.

The ruling underscores the importance of transparent billing practices and reinforces consumer rights against arbitrary pricing in eateries.

Fake IAS Officer Held for ₹41 Lakh Medical Contract Scam

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 28-year-old man posing as an IAS officer has been arrested for allegedly cheating a medical shop owner of Rs 41 lakh by promising a government contract under the National Health Mission.

The accused, KS Mithun, a resident of Chikkamagaluru, allegedly duped GR Satish (55), owner of 'Shreyas' medical store. Police said Mithun gained Satish's trust after being introduced by Dr Chandrashekar, who reportedly presented him as an IAS officer posted at Arogya Soudha and in charge of Chikkamagaluru district.

Claiming to be a probationary officer, Mithun allegedly promised to secure a medicine supply order worth Rs 1.8 crore for Primary Health Centres (PHCs). He demanded a 20 per cent advance commission and collected Rs 36 lakh in cash on January 18 near Jakkur Aerodrome, in the presence of the doctor. Later, he allegedly sought an additional Rs 5 lakh, which Satish transferred to his bank account.

When no order materialised even after months, Mithun reportedly delayed the process, citing procedural timelines. Growing suspicious, Satish verified the claims with health department officials and visited Arogya Soudha, only to discover that Mithun was not an IAS officer.

Following this, Satish approached the police. The Amruthahalli Police Station registered a case on April 11 under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita related to cheating and impersonation, and arrested the accused.

Investigators revealed that Mithun had a pattern of impersonating IAS and IPS officers, as well as other professionals. He allegedly used photographs with bureaucrats and politicians to falsely claim connections and win the confidence of victims before cheating them.

Police are now probing whether more individuals were duped using similar tactics.

National Gardening Day: Indoor Plants Redefine Urban Living

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Indoor plants have evolved from a simple hobby into a defining element of modern urban lifestyles, with many now embracing greenery as both décor and a wellness tool. On National Gardening Day, experts highlight how houseplants are fast becoming statement pieces in homes.

What began as a pandemic pastime has grown into a lasting lifestyle shift. Interior designer Punam Kalra notes that luxury today is increasingly linked to well-being. "Indoor plants improve how people live. They create routines, encourage care, and help us slow down in a fast-paced world," she says.

From a psychological perspective, Suchita Srivastava explains that gardening has emerged as a mindfulness practice. "It keeps the mind in the present moment, reducing stress and calming the nervous system," she observes.

In today's digital age, plants have also become a part of personal identity. Carefully curated green spaces — from minimalist interiors to lush balcony gardens — are widely shared on social media platforms like Instagram and Pinterest. For many, the idea of being a "plant parent" reflects a conscious lifestyle choice. However, not everyone views plants as a form of self-expression. Some prefer a more personal connection. "I just want my space to feel alive," says Mahak, while Surbhi finds plant care therapeutic and grounding. Others, like Shalini, believe this shift reflects a deeper, instinctive connection with nature rather than a passing trend.

Traditionally, plants served functional purposes, but their role has expanded significantly. Today, they are as much about aesthetics as they are about well-being. "It's not just about having plants anymore, but how they are styled and placed," Kalra adds.

While plants remain an affordable décor option at a basic level, curated indoor greenery has entered the luxury segment. Designer planters, rare species, and carefully styled arrangements are increasingly seen as premium investments.

SWM RULES UNCLEAR

SWM Confusion Delays Property Tax Payments in Apartments

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Property tax payments from apartment complexes in Bengaluru have slowed this April, with confusion over Solid Waste Management (SWM) charges under the Greater Bengaluru Authority creating uncertainty among residents and associations.

Typically among the earliest to pay taxes, large apartment clusters have held back this year due to a lack of clarity in defining and calculating "bulk waste generators" — complexes that produce over 100 kg of waste daily. While such generators are eligible for exemptions, they must declare their status on the property tax portal, a process many find unclear and cumbersome.

With no proper instructions or user guidance on the portal, residents are increasingly relying on external assistance to complete filings. The ambiguity has resulted in widespread hesitation, affecting what is usually the busiest tax payment period in the first fortnight of April.

According to revenue department sources, the city has around 5,600 registered bulk waste-generating complexes, including commercial establishments. However, this forms only a small fraction of the overall properties, yet the confusion has had a broader impact on compliance.

Residents say a major challenge is the lack of reliable data. "No household has been systematically measuring waste. Now we are expected to declare exact quantities," said Goutham Kamath, a resident of an apartment on Kanakapura Road. He added that even management committees lack accurate figures, increasing the risk of penalties for incorrect declarations.

Another resident, Ravindranath Shenoy, pointed out that the issue is not just filing taxes but the flawed system itself. "We are being asked to input waste details that we don't have. Some residents are simply guessing," he said, adding that there is still no clarity on refunds for SWM charges levied last year despite in-house waste management.

Critics argue that the system incorrectly expects individual flat owners to provide waste data, even though waste handling is typically managed collectively by apartment associations. This has led to inflated charges, with some residents reporting bills ranging from Rs 40,000 to Rs 60,000.

Satish Malya, President of the Bengaluru Apartments' Federation, said the process lacks logic and appears rushed. Citizen groups are now urging authorities to simplify the SWM section, allow flexible data entry, expand authorised vendor options, and issue clear guidelines to restore confidence and ensure smooth tax payments.

QUICK READ

Metro services extended till 2 am for IPL matches in B'luru

CH News, Bengaluru

In view of IPL 2026 matches at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited has extended 'Namma Metro' services till 2 am on April 15 and 24. The extension aims to ensure safe and convenient travel for cricket fans attending the matches. On these days, last train services from all terminal stations will run beyond the usual 11 pm schedule. From Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station, Majestic, trains will depart in all four directions till 1:30 am. However, there will be no change in Metro timings on April 18, with services operating as per the regular schedule.

Private bus crashes into field near Devanahalli, driver injured

CH News, Bengaluru

A private bus travelling from Kadiri in Andhra Pradesh to Bengaluru crashed into a roadside field near Mudugurki village on the Devanahalli–Chikkaballapur highway on Tuesday. The accident occurred after a lorry ahead suddenly applied brakes while taking a U-turn, prompting the bus driver to swerve left. The bus veered off the road and moved nearly 100 metres into an adjacent field. The driver sustained serious injuries and was admitted to a hospital. Passengers on board escaped with minor injuries, avoiding a major tragedy.

Ninth train set boosts Yellow Line, wait time to reduce

Bengaluru's Yellow Line gets ninth train set, reducing commuter wait times

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a major relief for metro commuters, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited has inducted the ninth train set on the Yellow Line, promising reduced waiting time and improved service efficiency on the busy RV Road–Bommasandra corridor.

Three coaches of the new train have already reached the Hebbagodi depot, while the remaining three are expected to arrive later. Once fully assembled and deployed, the train will enhance operational capacity on the line.

Currently, eight trains are running on the corridor with an average frequency of around 11 minutes. With the addition of the ninth train, the interval between services is expected to decrease, offering smoother and quicker commutes for daily passengers.

The Yellow Line has seen a steady rise in ridership, especially with increased residential and industrial activity along the stretch. Officials said the new train set is part of ongoing efforts to match infrastructure with growing commuter demand.

Further boosting capacity, two more train sets are expected to arrive by the end of April.

These trains are being manufactured in Titagarh, Kolkata, and are being delivered in phases as part of the city's metro expansion plan.

With enhanced frequency and additional coaches, commuters on the RV Road–Bommasandra route can expect improved reliability, reduced crowding, and a more comfortable travel experience in the coming weeks.

Man hacked to death inside house in Hoskote

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A 40-year-old man was brutally hacked to death by unidentified assailants inside his house in Dabbagunte village in Hoskote on Tuesday. The deceased, identified as Shivshankar, was reportedly speaking on his mobile phone when three men entered the premises and attacked him with deadly weapons. He sustained severe injuries to his head and neck and died on the spot due to excessive bleeding. The accused fled after the attack. A case has been registered at the Hoskote police station, and an investigation is underway to trace the suspects.

₹18,430 Crore Investment Approved, 15,032 Jobs Expected

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a major push to industrial growth and employment generation, the State High Level Approval Committee (SHLAC) has approved investment proposals worth ₹18,430.44 crore across various parts of the state, Chief Minister announced after chairing the committee's 67th meeting.

According to officials, a total of 17 project proposals were cleared during the meeting held at Home Office Krishna. This includes 11 new investment proposals and six additional investment proposals, reflecting sustained investor confidence in the state's industrial ecosystem.

The 11 new projects alone will bring in investments of ₹14,906.9 crore and are expected to generate employment for approximately 13,050 people.

Meanwhile, the six additional proposals will contribute ₹3,523.54 crore in investments and create around 1,982 jobs.

The Chief Minister emphasized that these investments are strategically distributed across multiple districts, ensuring balanced regional development while strengthening infrastructure and industrial capacity.

Senior members of the cabinet and administration attended the meeting, including Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Ministers MB Patil, KJ George, Priyank Kharge, and Chaluvarayaswamy. Chief Secretary Dr Shalini Rajneesh, Additional Chief Secretary Anjum Parvez, along with senior officials from the Industries and Commerce and Finance Departments, were also present.

The approvals are expected to accelerate economic activity, attract further investments, and reinforce the state's position as a leading industrial hub in the country.

Bulging dividers near metro pillars on ORR spark safety concerns

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Bulging dividers near metro pillars narrow ORR roads, raising commuter safety concerns

Commuters on Bengaluru's Outer Ring Road (ORR) have raised serious safety concerns over uneven concrete dividers near metro pillars, which are narrowing carriageways and increasing the risk of accidents. The issue has become prominent along stretches where metro construction is currently under way.

At multiple points, the central divider bulges outward around pillar bases, reducing usable road space and creating sudden bottlenecks. Motorists say these constrictions make navigation difficult, particularly during peak hours when traffic is dense and slow-moving.

Two-wheeler riders are especially vulnerable. "The road suddenly narrows near the pillars, and if you are not careful, you can easily hit the divider or another vehicle," said K Prasanth, a regular commuter. He added that the absence of proper markings and reflectors makes these stretches even more dangerous at night.

The concern has also gained traction on social media, with many questioning the lack of uniformity in road design and calling for immediate corrective measures. Commuters argue that better planning and execution could have prevented such hazards.

Officials associated with the project, however, clarified that the variations are due to structural requirements. The alignment of dividers near pillars depends on pier foundation designs, which follow engineering safety norms. They described the current setup as a temporary arrangement during construction.

Authorities assured that final road restoration, including uniform dividers and proper lane alignment, will be undertaken after completion of the work. However, senior officials from Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited were unavailable for comment.

The ORR stretch is part of the Blue Line project connecting Central Silk Board to Kempegowda International Airport, being executed in phases to improve city connectivity.

AMBEDKAR JAYANTI OBSERVED...

Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan paid floral tributes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar by garlanding his statue during the Ambedkar Jayanti programme held at Cheluvadipalya in Chamarajpet, Bengaluru. Local leaders, including Govindaraj, were present on the occasion.

Private Hospital Doctor Booked for Sexual Harassment Over Messages and Calls

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A doctor working at a private hospital in Bengaluru has been accused of sexual harassment following allegations of inappropriate messages and phone calls sent to a colleague.

According to police, the victim, who worked as an accountant at the hospital for the past nine months, filed a complaint at the HSR Layout police station. Based on her complaint, an FIR has been registered against the accused doctor, identified as Rakesh Jayaprakash.

The complaint alleges that the doctor behaved inappropriately by initiating personal conversations and sending unwanted messages, including texts such as "Miss you." He is also accused of making repeated phone calls to the victim, causing her discomfort at the workplace.

It is further stated in the complaint that the situation escalated after the victim's husband became aware of the messages, leading to a confrontation. Following the incident, the victim reportedly resigned from her job at the hospital.

Police have registered a case under relevant sections related to sexual harassment and have issued a notice to the accused, asking him to appear for questioning.

Investigators said the accused is currently out of the state and has requested additional time to join the inquiry.

'Unhappy Over Denied Davanagere Ticket, But Issue Resolved Later'

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan has admitted that he was initially unhappy over not being allotted a ticket from the Davanagere South constituency, despite submitting the names of seven Muslim leaders for consideration. However, he clarified that the issue was later resolved and there is no ongoing dispute.

Speaking to the media, Zameer Ahmed Khan said he had placed the names of seven Muslim leaders, including Jabbar, during a KPCC meeting attended by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala. He stated that he had clearly expressed his expectations in the meeting and had even said that if he failed to secure a win, he would resign from his ministerial post.

"It is true that I was unhappy about not being given a ticket from Davanagere. I had given the names of seven Muslim leaders, but I did not specifically ask for a ticket for Jabbar. I had openly said this in the KPCC meeting," he said.

The minister further clarified that he had suggested any of the seven leaders could be considered instead of Jabbar, who is already an MLC, adding that he was aware it would not be appropriate to recommend him for a contesting ticket. He reiterated that there was no concealment in his statements and that he had openly discussed the matter before senior party leaders.

Zameer Ahmed Khan also addressed the resignation issue linked to Abdul Jabbar, stating that he was not present when Jabbar made his decision and was unaware of the reasons behind it. He added that although there was some dissatisfaction within local party circles initially, the matter has since been settled.

Expressing confidence in the party's prospects, he said he expects a strong victory in both Davanagere and Bagalkot constituencies, adding that he considers himself a "common worker" dedicated to public service rather than a leader seeking positions.

Woman Among Two Arrested for Receiving Stolen Gold, Creating Fakes

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

RT Nagar police have arrested two people, including a woman, for allegedly dealing in stolen gold jewellery and replacing it with fake ornaments to mislead owners and investigators.

The accused have been identified as Mohammed Mudasir (18) and Tabassum (35). Police said they have recovered 75 grams of gold jewellery worth ₹10.55 lakh from their possession.

According to investigators, Mudasir, who was working as a domestic helper in the RT Nagar area, had been involved in stealing gold ornaments. He allegedly sold the stolen jewellery to Tabassum, who is accused of regularly purchasing stolen gold items.

Police further revealed that Tabassum would later have imitation jewellery made in the same design as the original stolen pieces. She allegedly used the genuine gold ornaments for personal benefit while keeping the fake versions as replacements.

When victims or authorities attempted to recover the stolen jewellery, she reportedly argued that the counterfeit items were the original ones, creating confusion during verification.

Following a detailed investigation, police tracked down Mudasir and arrested him, which led to further revelations about Tabassum's role in receiving and altering the stolen goods.

Subsequently, Tabassum was also taken into custody, and the police recovered the remaining gold ornaments from her possession.

The RT Nagar police have confirmed that both accused are now in custody and further investigation is underway to determine if more people are involved in the network of theft and illegal trade of gold jewellery.

BOOST FOR PASSENGERS

Special trains announced from Bengaluru for summer rush relief

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In view of the summer vacation rush, South Western Railway has announced special train services connecting Bengaluru with Rupsa in Odisha and New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal to ease passenger congestion.

Three trips of the Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal (SMVT) Bengaluru–Rupsa Special Express will be operated on April 15, 22 and 29. The return service from Rupsa to Bengaluru Cantonment will run on April 16, 23 and 30. These trains will halt at key stations including Krishnarajapuram, Jolarpet, Vijayawada, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. Each train will have 20 coaches, comprising second class, sleeper and AC compartments.

Additionally, a two-trip special express between Yesvantpur and New Jalpaiguri has been scheduled. The train will depart Yesvantpur on April 17 and 24, reaching its destination on the third day. Return services will operate on April 20 and 27, terminating at Bengaluru Cantonment.

This train will pass through major junctions such as Yelahanka, Guntur, Vijayawada, Kharagpur and Malda Town, with a total of 21 coaches, including AC and sleeper classes. Railway officials said the initiative aims to manage increased travel demand during the holiday season and ensure smoother journeys for passengers travelling to eastern parts of the country.

QUICK READ

Two youths die in Davangere crash tragedy

DAVANGERE

A private bus and bike collision near the fire station on the outskirts of Channagiri town in Davangere district claimed two young lives late at night. Victims were Manjunath aged 25 from Chitradurga and Ganesh aged 27 from Holalkere. The bus was travelling towards Chitradurga when it hit the bike. The bus driver fled the scene and the bike caught fire immediately after impact. Police and fire brigade teams rushed and registered a case at Channagiri police station. Officials are investigating the cause of the accident and have urged caution on highways. Further probe continues.

Karwar to face day-long power shutdown

KARWAR

A planned power outage has been announced in the Karwar sub-division due to HT conductor replacement and maintenance work. Electricity supply will be disrupted on April 15 from 10 am to 6 pm in several areas including Karwar town, Habbuwada, KHB colony, Nandanagadda, Sunkeri, Telangarod and Shirwada feeder limits. The Assistant Executive Engineer said the shutdown is necessary for maintenance work to improve power supply reliability. Consumers have been requested to cooperate during the outage and plan their activities accordingly. Authorities also advised residents to take precautions to avoid inconvenience during the eight-hour power cut across affected areas.

Ambedkar Jayanti celebrated at Betageri College campus

BETAGERI

Ambedkar Jayanti was celebrated at Shri Maharana Pratap Singh Educational Institution on April 14 Tuesday morning. The 135th birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution, was observed with respect. Institution founder Ganesh Singh Byali offered floral tribute to Ambedkar's portrait and performed Staff members gathered and paid homage during the programme. Professor S M Ullagaddi and acting headmaster H S Byali were present along with other staff.
Speakers highlighted Ambedkar's contributions to equality and education. The event was conducted in a simple manner and encouraged students and staff to follow his values in daily life.

BJP has honoured Ambedkar's Legacy: Vijayendra

Vijayendra praised BJP for implementing Ambedkar's vision and welfare work, while criticizing Congress for vote-bank politics

SHIVAMOGGA

BJP State President B. Y. Vijayendra said that the party is actively working to honour the legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and spread awareness about his contribution to the nation.

Speaking to the media after taking part in the 135th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr. Ambedkar, Vijayendra said that the BJP has been observing the occasion across Karnataka in a meaningful and respectful manner. He said party workers cleaned statues and installed lamps in towns and villages as part of the celebrations, and programmes were held at Ambedkar circles and streets.

He stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken special efforts to implement Ambedkar's vision and work for the welfare of marginalized communities. According to him, the BJP has given real respect to Ambedkar by translating his ideas into action.

Vijayendra also criticized the Congress party, alleging that it had used Ambedkar's name only for vote-bank politics while failing to genuinely support oppressed communities. He claimed that the BJP has worked more sincerely in spreading Ambedkar's message.Referring to upcoming by-elections, he expressed confidence that the BJP would win in constituencies

including Davanagere and Bagalkot. He said public dissatisfaction with the Congress government and internal issues within it would work in favour of the BJP.He also challenged the state government for an open debate on development, questioning what progress had been made under different administrations. He said such discussions would expose the performance of the ruling government.Vijayendra further alleged that governance in the state has weakened and criticized the Congress for ignoring development issues.

Nothing wrong in seeking ministerial post: Santosh Lad

DHARWAD

Minister Santosh Lad said that there is nothing wrong in legislators requesting ministerial positions from the party high command, as it is a normal part of political aspirations.

Speaking to reporters in Dharwad, Lad said that all elected representatives, whether they have won once or multiple times, are eligible to seek a ministerial post. He said many Congress MLAs who travelled to Delhi have done so to present their case before the party leadership.

However, he added that all such discussions must follow party discipline and protocol.

He clarified that while seeking a position is not wrong, decisions must ultimately be taken by the party leadership.

Commenting on the Women's Reservation Bill, Lad said the Congress has supported the proposal in principle and had earlier attempted to pass it. He, however, pointed out that there are still unresolved issues such as census data, delimitation, and seat distribution that need detailed discussion before implementation.

He also said that the bill raises several questions regarding population-based representation and administrative planning, and therefore requires wider consultation.

On international issues, the minister expressed concern over global conflicts and stressed that India should maintain a balanced foreign policy and protect its national interests.

Responding to reports about an audio clip related to the murder of Congress youth leader Fairoz Pathan, Lad said he had no information about it and would not comment without verification. He noted that the police commissioner is already investigating the matter and called the incident unfortunate.The minister's remarks come amid ongoing political discussions within the Congress over cabinet expansion and internal party coordination, with several MLAs reportedly seeking ministerial inclusion ahead of future reshuffles.

Santosh Lad said seeking minister posts is normal, decisions rest with high command, stressed party discipline, and noted Congress supports women's reservation with concerns

Allegations of internal sabotage in Davangere by-election denied by Zameer Ahmed Khan's supporters.

Congress leaders clash over Zameer Ahmed role

KOPPAL

Internal tensions have surfaced within the Congress party after some leaders from the same community allegedly accused Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan of influencing the party's by-election performance in Davangere.

According to political discussions, certain leaders and representatives within the party have claimed that there were internal efforts to weaken Congress candidate Samartha Shamanur in the Davangere Assembly by-election. They alleged that these actions indirectly affected the party's prospects in the constituency.

However, supporters of Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan have strongly rejected these claims, calling them baseless and politically motivated.

They said the minister initially sought a ticket for a minority community candidate but later followed the party high command's decision and actively campaigned for the official Congress nominee.

They further stated that his campaign helped bring back support from minority voters who had shown hesitation earlier, and this improved the party's position during the final phase of voting.

Zameer Ahmed Khan's supporters argued that if the Congress candidate loses, the minister should not be blamed, and if the candidate performs well, his efforts should be acknowledged. They accused some leaders of trying to shift responsibility for internal disagreements and possible defeat onto him.

They also said that after the election results, the real contributions of leaders will become clear, and voters will decide who truly worked for the party's official candidate.

The issue has highlighted growing differences within the party, with both sides presenting contrasting claims. The final outcome of the by-election is expected to determine how these internal accusations will be judged politically in the coming days.

10-year-old girl dies in tragic accidental incident

CHIKKAMAGALURU

A tragic incident was reported in Hebballi village of Chikkamagaluru taluk where a 10-year-old girl died accidentally while playing at home. The girl, identified as Alekha, was playing on a makeshift swing made using a saree when the accident occurred. Police said the saree loop got entangled around her leg and later tightened around her neck, leading to suffocation. Her parents, who had gone out for daily wage work, returned home and found her unconscious. They immediately rushed her to Chikkamagaluru District Hospital, but doctors declared her dead on arrival.

Drone training centre launched at Alva's College

MOODBIDRI

A drone training centre approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation was inaugurated at Alva's College on Tuesday, marking a significant step in promoting emerging technologies in Dakshina Kannada district.

The facility, established by Aerodynamics Institute, is the first DGCA-recognised drone training centre in the district. It aims to equip students with practical knowledge and skills in drone operations.

Inaugurating the centre, Coast Guard DIG and District Commander P.K. Mishra highlighted the growing importance of drone technology in both defence and civilian

sectors.

He said drones are transforming modern warfare due to their cost-effectiveness, precision and versatility.

Referring to global developments, he noted that drones are playing a crucial role in conflicts involving countries such as the US, Israel and Iran, significantly altering combat strategies.

He also pointed out that drone technology enables even smaller nations to compete with technologically advanced countries.

Alva's Education Foundation Managing Trustee Vivek Alva stressed that learning drone technology is essential in the present era and urged students to adapt to emerging innovations.

Dialysis centre inaugurated at Kottur Hospital

VIJAYANAGAR

A new dialysis centre was inaugurated at the Government Hospital in Kottur under the government's Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme. The facility was opened by MLA Nemraj Nayka.

Speaking at the event, the MLA said dialysis treatment is essential for patients suffering from kidney-related diseases and diabetes. He noted that many poor patients are forced to travel to private hospitals or district centres for treatment, which increases both cost and time.

He said the new facility at the taluk hospital will greatly benefit local patients by providing treatment closer to home. He also instructed the concerned agency to ensure that dialysis services are not interrupted under any circumstances.

The MLA added that the centre will help reduce the financial burden on poor families and improve access to timely medical care in rural areas.Officials had earlier reported delays in starting the service, which had been highlighted in the media. However, authorities and the operating agency later assured that services would begin soon.

Police detain job seekers' protest in Dharwad

DHARWAD

A planned protest by job seekers in Dharwad was stopped by police, leading to the detention of student leaders and heavy security deployment across the city.

The protest, organized under the State Student Union, was aimed at demanding the filling of around 2.84 lakh government vacancies. The demonstration was scheduled to begin at Jayanagar Circle and proceed towards Jubilee Circle. However, before it could begin.

MLA SIVAGANGA BACKS MINISTER POST DEMAND, SEEKS FRESH FACES

DAVANAGERE

Channagiri MLA Sivaganga Basavaraj said it is fair for MLAs to demand ministerial positions, while also suggesting that new leaders should be given opportunities in the cabinet.

Speaking at his residence in Davanagere, he said senior MLAs who have served two or three terms have every right to seek ministerial posts and have even gone to Delhi to present their case.

He added that fresh legislators should also be included in the cabinet, stating that good governance requires a balance between experience and new energy, similar to old roots producing new shoots. Basavaraj said he has no objection if he is given a ministerial post but clarified that final decisions rest with the party high command. He said, "We are not monks; we also have aspirations," while stressing discipline under leadership.He also commented on leadership discussions within the party, expressing confidence that D. K. Shivakumar would become Chief Minister in future, saying such outcomes depend entirely on the high command.

Responding to political questions, he said the Congress party may gain more seats in upcoming by-elections and dismissed opposition criticism.He further said internal responsibilities and campaign roles are decided by the party leadership, adding that senior leaders are being assigned duties based on their strength.Basavaraj emphasized that all party members must work collectively for Congress success.

DISTRICT CIVIC CONVENTION

Anganwadi Workers' district convention on April 20

MANGALURU

The Dakshina Kannada District Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Association has announced that its ICDS Golden Jubilee celebrations and district convention will be held on April 20 at Kudmul Ranga Rao Town Hall in Mangaluru.

Addressing a press conference at Press House, district president Tara Ballal said the programme will begin at 9 am and will bring together around 2,500 Anganwadi workers and helpers from across the district.

She said the event will be inaugurated by Legislative Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader. Minister for Women and Child Development Lakshmi Hebbalkar, District In-charge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, and MP Brijesh Chowta are expected to attend along with other elected representatives and officials.

The programme will also include a felicitation ceremony for retired officers and cultural performances by association members.

Association leaders said the convention will highlight key issues related to Anganwadi workers, especially the demand for implementation of minimum wages. They said the matter is currently under judicial consideration, and a formal petition will be submitted to the minister in this regard.

State treasurer Vishalakshi stated that workers have already staged several protests demanding fair wages and warned that no additional work will be taken up unless minimum wage demands are fulfilled.

Association secretary Ashalatha, state representative Chandravathi, and taluk-level presidents Vijayavani and Rajeevi were also present at the press meet. Leaders said the convention aims to strengthen unity among workers and bring attention to their long-pending demands.

South Western Railway announces summer special trains

HUBBALLI

To manage increased passenger rush during the summer vacation, South Western Railway has announced special train services between Bengaluru–Rupsa and Yeshwantpur–New Jalpaiguri routes.

Officials said a three-trip special express train will operate between SMVT Bengaluru and Rupsa, passing through Bengaluru Cantonment on the return journey. Train No. 06545 will depart from SMVT Bengaluru on April 15, 22 and 29 and reach Rupsa the next day.

The return service, Train No. 06546, will run from Rupsa on April 16, 23 and 30 and arrive at Bengaluru Cantonment.

The route will include major stops such as Krishnarajapuram, Katpadi, Vijayawada, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Bhadrak among others.

The train will have 20 coaches including AC, sleeper and general class compartments.

In another service, a summer special train between Yeshwantpur and New Jalpaiguri will operate to handle heavy passenger demand.

QUICK READ

Tyre burst causes KSRTC bus crash near Tumakuru

TUMAKURU

A major road accident occurred near Dwaralu Bridge on the national highway after a tyre burst in a speeding canter led to a chain collision involving a KSRTC bus on Tuesday afternoon. The canter reportedly lost control after the tyre burst, forcing the bus behind it to crash into the vehicle. The impact damaged the front of the bus and left several passengers injured. All injured were shifted to Shira Taluk Hospital for treatment. Tavarekere police visited the spot and cleared traffic congestion that built up for some time. Investigation is underway to determine the exact cause of the accident.

Chitrahalli PU College records 97.50% result

CHITRADURGA

Morarji Desai Pre-University Residential Science College, Chitrahalli in Holalkere taluk, has achieved an overall result of 97.50 percent in the Second PUC annual examination. The college functions under the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society. Out of 80 students who appeared, 23 secured distinction, 54 passed in first class, and one student passed in second class. The toppers of the college are M Soumya with 570 marks (95%), C R Chinnu with 564 marks (94%) and M Satish with 559 marks (93.16%). College principal, staff and officials congratulated the students and appreciated their hard work and excellent academic performance this year.

Bapuji School hosts vibrant Natakotsava 2026

CHITRADURGA

Theatre is the first university of mankind, said Dr. Basavaprabhu Mahaswamiji of Davanagere Shivayogi Ashram while inaugurating the Shiva Sanchara Natakotsava-2026 at Bapuji School premises in Pillekerenahalli.

The event was organized by Shivakumara Kala Sangha, District Sharan Sahitya Parishad, Rangasourabha Kala Sangha and Bapuji Group of Institutions in association with the Department of Kannada and Culture. It included drama performances, lectures, musical programs and felicitation of artists.Mahaswamiji said theatre is not only a source of entertainment but also a powerful medium for social awareness. He described it as a living university that teaches life lessons.

Cabinet reshuffle signals visible: Parameshwar

Parameshwar hinted cabinet reshuffle talks, said MLAs seek posts, but final decision rests with Congress high command

TUMAKURU

Home Minister G. Parameshwar said that indications of a possible cabinet reshuffle are visible, as discussions continue within the political circles and several MLAs have travelled to Delhi seeking ministerial positions.

Speaking to the media in Tumakuru, he said that around 30 MLAs have gone to Delhi to meet the party high command regarding cabinet inclusion. He clarified that there is nothing wrong in elected representatives, including those who have served multiple terms, requesting ministerial posts as part of their political responsibility and aspirations.

However, Parameshwar stressed that any decision related to cabinet reshuffle or leadership changes will be taken only by the party high command. He said that internal processes are underway and final decisions will depend on the leadership at the central level.

He also commented on the Women's Reservation Bill introduced by the Central Government, saying that the move is welcome and has been a long-standing demand. He recalled that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had also supported women's representation and noted that the Congress had earlier introduced similar proposals.

At the same time, he suggested that the government should hold discussions with all political parties before implementing the bill to ensure wider consensus.

On administrative matters, he referred to recent actions taken in Parappana Agrahara Jail, stating that senior officials have been appointed to curb irregularities and ensure proper functioning. He said investigations are being carried out and necessary FIRs are being filed where required.

Parameshwar's remarks come amid ongoing political activity in Karnataka, with speculation growing over possible changes in the state cabinet and increased consultations between state leaders and the party high command in Delhi.

Magadi MLA slams politics over development works

MAGADI

Magadi MLA H.C. Balakrishna has strongly criticized those opposing development works in the name of statues. Speaking to reporters after garlanding the statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at the town municipality, he said that some people are doing politics instead of building lives.

He said a high-tech hospital worth Rs 42 crore and an Ambedkar building worth Rs 6 crore are being opposed and cases are being filed. He said the projects will help everyone not only Dalits and added that he had provided land for the construction. He said a court has ruled that the hospital should come first followed by the statue. Land has been allotted near Gandhi Circle for a taluk office and the old office will be used for the hospital project.

Balakrishna said he had built a sixteen-foot tall Mahatma Gandhi statue costing Rs 30 lakh in Gandhinagar. He said statues of Basavanna and Kempegowda were also installed and noted that such works should not be linked with voting politics. He criticized opponents for blocking development projects and said they should focus on public welfare. He also spoke about irrigation works including Hemavati Express Canal and said he knows how water projects should be managed. He challenged opponents to a public debate on April 25 regarding corruption allegations and other issues. He said he is working for development and not for personal gain or elections. He also mentioned support from leaders and officials for ongoing projects.

Balakrishna criticized opposition to development projects over statues, defending hospital and Ambedkar building works, and urged focus on public welfare over politics

Several local leaders and officials were present at the event. Residents welcomed development announcements amid ongoing political debate in Magadi town saying progress should continue without obstacles or disputes.

Ambedkar inspires equality message in Chitradurga

CHITRADURGA

People gathered at the Chitradurga Institute of Medical Sciences to celebrate the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar with respect and emotion. Speakers said Ambedkar was a guiding light for equality, education, and social change in India. Dr. B. Y. Yuvaraj described him as the sun of Dalits' lives and a true revolutionary who empowered the oppressed. He said Ambedkar encouraged people to gain strength through education, unity, and struggle against injustice. Officials and medical staff paid floral tributes and remembered his contribution to the Constitution of India. They highlighted his vision for equal rights, better healthcare, and dignity for all citizens in society.

Modi to visit Mandya to inaugurate Adichunchanagiri Mutt temple, address gathering.

Mandya: PM to inaugurate Bhairavaikya Mandir

MANDYA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Mandya district on April 15 (today) to inaugurate the Sri Guru Bhairavaikya Mandir at the Adichunchanagiri Mutt in Nagamangala taluk. The visit is expected to draw large crowds as extensive preparations have been made at the venue.

The temple, built in memory of late seer Balagangadharanatha Swamiji, will be formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister, followed by his address at a public gathering organised on the premises. Authorities expect participation from more than one lakh devotees, making it one of the major events in the region.

A massive stage has been set up at the BGS Sports Ground for the public address. Security has been tightened across the area, with over 2,000 police personnel deployed to manage crowd control, traffic regulation and safety arrangements. Officials said all arrangements, including transport coordination and entry management, have been completed ahead of the high-profile visit. The entire Adichunchanagiri campus has been decorated and prepared to host the large gathering.

As part of a special gesture, a traditional Mysore Peta has been crafted for the Prime Minister. The headgear, designed using Banaras fabric and featuring the Gandaberunda emblem, has been prepared by Mysuru

Ambedkar portrait procession marks grand jayanti celebrations

CHITRADURGA

A grand portrait procession of Dr B R Ambedkar was held in Chitradurga city on Tuesday to mark his 135th birth anniversary. The event featured decorated portraits, cultural displays and folk art performances, drawing large public participation. District Collector T Venkatesh flagged off the procession after paying floral tributes near the historic fort. The rally passed through major city circles including Anebagilu, Mahatma Gandhi Circle, Kittur Rani Channamma Circle and Ambedkar Circle before reaching Sri Maharshi Valmiki Bhavan. Folk troupes like Nasik Dol and Tasharam Dol added color and energy to the procession. Officials also shared information about government welfare schemes available through various departments, especially for social and scheduled caste welfare. Several senior officers, staff members, students and community leaders took part in the event. The celebration highlighted Dr Ambedkar contributions to the Constitution and aimed to spread awareness about equality rights and government support schemes among the public in the district with enthusiasm and respect.

AMBEDKAR'S IDEAS ESSENTIAL FOR TRUE DEMOCRACY: SHIVASUNDARA

VIJAYAPURA

Progressive thinker Shivasundara has said that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideas are essential for strengthening real democracy in the country.

He was speaking at the fifth-day programme of the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations held as part of a five-day literary fair organised by Dalit and progressive organisations at Darbar High School Grounds in Vijayapura.

Shivasundara said that Indian history should be understood in two phases—pre-Buddhist and post-Buddhist periods—and stressed that equality is the natural principle of human birth. He observed that a large section of society has faced exploitation due to unchallenged cultural practices, and said Ambedkar's thoughts are more relevant than ever today.

He further said that Ambedkar symbolises democracy and questioned whether the constitutional ideals have been fully implemented in society. He also expressed concern over continuing social and economic inequality despite political equality being guaranteed through the Constitution.

Speaking on the occasion, Mysuru-based thinker Avinash TGS said that untouchability still exists in society and must be completely eradicated. He added that Ambedkar should not be limited to caste identity but should be recognised as a leader of all communities.

Other speakers highlighted Ambedkar's vision on education, equality, environmental concerns, and social reform. They also discussed the need to build a society based on the values of Buddha, Basavanna and Ambedkar.During the programme, children read the Preamble of the Constitution, while a young speaker's address in English drew appreciation from the audience.

Congress leaders defend Naseer Ahmed

SRINIVASPUR

Local Congress leaders in Srinivaspur urged the party high command not to take disciplinary action against Chief Minister's Political Secretary Naseer Ahmed and Minister B. Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, calling them loyal party workers. At a press conference held at the PLD Bank premises, Dimbal Ashok said both leaders have always protected party interests and never worked against its principles. He said Naseer Ahmed has the ability to unite people across communities in Kolar district and should not be seen narrowly. He urged AICC and KPCC leaders to avoid action against senior leaders like Zameer Ahmed Khan and Naseer Ahmed, warning it could harm grassroots morale. Former municipal president K. Anees Ahmed alleged that the high command may have received wrong information about their role in the Davangere South by-election. He said some Muslim community members were unhappy after denial of ticket in the constituency, leading to misunderstanding among party circles. Block Congress Committee president H. Akbar Sharief said both leaders remain loyal and have always worked for party interests. KOMUL director K. K. Manjunath said both leaders played key role in mobilising support during by-election and strengthened party performance. He warned that action against senior leaders could send a wrong message to workers and weaken organisational unity. Minority leaders present said the two leaders were important for consolidating over eighty thousand Muslim votes in Davangere South constituency. They alleged that some people were trying to damage their reputation by giving false information to party leadership. Speakers said while dissatisfaction over ticket distribution is natural, it should not be used to target senior leaders.

Tipper crash kills two in Chamarajanagar accident

CHAMARAJANAGAR

Two people died on the spot after a tipper lorry collided with a car near Mallaiyanapura Gate in Gundlupet taluk of Chamarajanagar district on Tuesday. Police said the car was travelling from Kerala to Bengaluru when the accident occurred. An 18-wheeler tipper bearing registration KL47M3272 and carrying M-sand rammed into the vehicle. Ayesha Noori aged forty one and Nuha aged eighteen died on the spot while a nine year old boy Nahian and driver Mohammad Azir suffered serious injuries and were shifted to Mysuru hospital.

Police said negligence and overspeeding by the tipper driver are suspected to be the cause of the crash and the vehicles have been seized for investigation. Weeks long protests by farmers continue in the region against uncontrolled mineral transport to Kerala demanding strict regulation. Officials said they will review road safety measures and take action to prevent such accidents and urged motorists to drive carefully in the busy highway stretch connecting Karnataka and Kerala region today

REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL LEADER

Ambedkar Jayanti celebrated with tributes

CHITRADURGA

MLA K.C. Virendra Pappi described B. R. Ambedkar as a revolutionary leader who challenged inequality and the mindset rooted in Manusmriti, during the Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations held in the city.

The programme was organised at Shri Maharshi Valmiki Bhavan in association with the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Social Welfare Department and City Council.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said Ambedkar was not just an individual but a movement that stood for equality and justice. He highlighted Ambedkar's belief in education as a powerful tool for social change and stressed that it should be accessible equally to both men and women.

He added that Ambedkar dedicated his life to eliminating untouchability and social discrimination and should not be limited to any one community. He also noted Ambedkar's contribution to water resource development and his vision for river interlinking.

Urban Development Authority Chairman M.K. Taj Peer said the Constitution ensures equality among all religions and communities. He added that it has empowered women in education, employment, and national service.

District leaders said the government is committed to implementing Ambedkar's vision through welfare schemes and inclusive policies. Speakers also stressed the need to achieve social and economic equality for true freedom.

As part of the celebrations, district-level awards named after Ambedkar and Babu Jagjivan Ram were presented to achievers. Students who excelled in SSLC and PUC examinations were also honoured.

Several officials, community leaders, and citizens attended the programme, paying tribute to Ambedkar's enduring legacy.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as **M RAMASWAMY**, S/o Sriram Naik, R/O- Ward No- 01, Plot No- 16, Jk Nilaya, Talur Road, Near BBKV School Yanna, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bellary, Karnataka- 583103, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **RAMESH KUMAR NAIK**.

CH CLASSIFED

To Place Classifed ad Contact : 080-41209042

PUBLIC NOTICE

In the matter of Diary No. 21328/2025, Ediga Venkateswarly v. T. Neelakanta & Ors., arising out of the final judgment and order dated 29.03.2023 in MACMA No. 580/2015 passed by the High Court of Andhra Pradesh at Amaravati, pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, Civil Appellate Jurisdiction, notice is hereby given to:
T. Neelakanta, S/o Chennaraidu, R/o Chikballapura, District Chikkaballapura, Karnataka
Whereas the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, by order dated 16.05.2025, was pleased to issue notice in the Special Leave Petition as well as in the application for condonation of delay; whereas by further order dated 13.03.2026, substituted service through paper publication was permitted; and whereas the matter is next listed on 07.05.2026;
You are hereby called upon to enter appearance before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, either in person or through an Advocate-on-Record, and file your response/counter, if any, in accordance with law, failing which the matter shall be heard and decided in your absence.
For Petitioner
Mr. Sabarish Subramanian, AOR
Mrs. Sivani KMS
Mr. M.L.Srinivasa Reddy, Advocates

QUICK READ

Gram panchayat member Shot Dead near Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA

Tension prevailed on the outskirts of Vijayapura after a man was shot dead by unidentified assailants near Aliabad on Tuesday. The deceased has been identified as Raju Kuri, a Gram Panchayat member from Pangaru Doddi village. According to police, the attackers allegedly fired around six rounds at him and later attacked him with stones, leading to his death on the spot. Rural police rushed to the area immediately after receiving information and began an investigation. The motive behind the murder is not yet known. Officials said further details will be revealed after a detailed probe into the incident continues.

89 trees marked for removal for new hospital

MAGADI

A proposal has been made to clear 89 trees in Magadi town for the construction of a new government hospital building. The project will be taken up in Survey No. 267 of Magadi village. The Forest Department has issued a public notice identifying trees of various species that fall within the construction area. Authorities have invited objections and suggestions from the public regarding the tree removal. Residents can submit their views in writing or by email. A public hearing is scheduled on April 21 from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Officials said objections must be submitted within seven days of the notice.

Father kills son over appearance dispute

VIJAYAPURA

A shocking incident has come to light in Nagathana village of Vijayapura district where a father allegedly killed his six-year-old son because the child did not resemble him. The accused, Mallikarjuna Arakeri, is said to have taken his son Siddhartha Mallikarjuna Arakeri to school on March 16 but instead carried him to the Krishna river near Vadoli in Maharashtra's Karad district and pushed him into the river.
Police said the man later misled the family by claiming the child was admitted to a school hostel. Suspicion grew when the mother demanded to see the child, leading to a complaint. During interrogation, the accused reportedly confessed to the crime. Investigation is ongoing.

Magadi leaders urge equality on Ambedkar Jayanti

Magadi event honored Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram, praising their contributions to equality, Constitution, and agricultural development

MAGADI

A programme marking the birth anniversaries of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram was held at the Magadi taluk office premises, where leaders called for building a more equal society by following the ideals of both national icons.

MLA H. C. Balakrishna said that Ambedkar and Babu Jagjivan Ram were two of the strongest pillars of India, and their contributions continue to guide the nation. He stated that true social equality can only be achieved when people adopt their principles in daily life.He highlighted Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram's work as Union Agriculture Minister, saying his policies had brought major changes in India's agricultural sector. He also said that Ambedkar laid the foundation for an equal society through the Constitution.Balakrishna remarked that the caste system still exists in society and stressed the need to continue efforts toward equality. He credited the Congress party for implementing Ambedkar's vision and said leaders like Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Manmohan Singh contributed to strengthening social justice policies.He also defended the state gvernment's welfare schemes, including free electricity and guarantee programmes, and questioned critics of these initiatives, saying they should first benefit from such schemes before opposing them. He also criticised the opposition, accusing it of creating divisions in society.

Officials present at the event also spoke about Ambedkar's role in shaping modern India and his fight against social injustice. Tehsildar Sharath Kumar said Ambedkar's life is an inspiration for today's generation.

During the programme, students who excelled in various fields were honoured. Leaders and officials from different departments participated, and speakers jointly called for unity, education, and equal opportunity for all sections of society.

Healthy lifestyle key to healthy ageing: Dr Anand Ambali

VIJAYAPURA

Dr Ambali explained ageing health issues like Parkinson's, dementia, and stressed lifestyle, diet, exercise, and social engagement

Adopting a good and disciplined lifestyle can help people remain healthy even in old age, said Dr. Anand Ambali, M.D., Professor and Head of the Senior Citizen Health Department at BLDE University, Vijayapura.

He was speaking at a programme organised by the Rotary Probus Club Vijayapura Uttara at Veerashaiva Lingayat Bhavan in the city.

Dr. Ambali said that old age is an unavoidable stage of life and various health issues naturally arise during this period. He noted that lifestyle management plays a key role in preventing or managing age-related diseases.

Explaining Parkinson's disease, he said it is caused by reduced dopamine production in the brain and leads to symptoms such as tremors, slow movement, muscle stiffness, balance issues, constipation, insomnia, depression and loss of smell. While there is no permanent cure, he said the condition can be controlled through timely treatment and a healthy lifestyle.

He added that senior citizens may also face conditions such as dementia, cognitive decline and muscle weakness. To manage these issues, he recommended a balanced protein-rich diet, regular walking, yoga, muscle-strengthening exercises, proper sleep, adequate water intake and maintaining social connections.

He also highlighted the specialised geriatric care services available at BLDE Hospital, including comprehensive treatment facilities under one roof and training programmes for caregivers. He urged senior citizens to make use of these services.

Rotary Probus Club President Mahadeva Halalli presided over the programme and advised senior citizens to follow medical guidance and government welfare schemes.

Several senior citizens participated in the event, and a PUC achiever, Vedika Yelasangi, was felicitated on the occasion.

Minister said KMF LPG supply ensured for Nandini production, summer demand rising, and leadership or ministerial decisions rest.

No shortage of cylinders for Nandini production: Minister Venkatesh

CHAMARAJANAGAR

There is no shortage of LPG cylinders required for the production of Nandini dairy products, said Minister K. Venkatesh, clarifying concerns over supply.

Speaking to reporters in Chamarajanagar, the Minister said that Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF), which produces Nandini products, had made a request for LPG cylinders for manufacturing purposes and the required supply is being ensured.

He said production has not been affected and clarified that while there may be temporary demand pressure, supply is being maintained as it is a government-run organisation. He also added that sales of Nandini products are expected to rise further during the summer season.

Responding to political questions, the Minister said that decisions regarding leadership changes, including the Chief Minister's post, are left entirely to the party high command. He also remarked that there is nothing wrong in aspiring for ministerial positions, noting that such matters are being handled internally by party leadership.

On by-election prospects, he expressed confidence that the Congress party would win both Davangere and Bagalkot constituencies, stating that minority votes are supporting the party.

Earlier, the district witnessed Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations across Chamarajanagar, Gundlupet, Kollegal and Hanur taluks with official participation and public programmes.

As part of the observance, floral tributes were paid to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's portrait at the district administration premises. A public programme was also held where Hampi Kannada University emeritus professor Prof. Rahmat Tarikere delivered the keynote address highlighting Ambedkar's contribution to the Constitution and social equality.

In Kollegal, a grand procession carrying Ambedkar's portrait was taken out, while similar celebrations were held across the district with participation from officials, elected representatives and the public.

Celebrates Ambedkar Jayanti with grandeur

HUNSUR

Ambedkar Jayanti was celebrated in Hunsur on April 14 with great respect as the birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution and a great social reformer who worked for equality, education, and justice for all communities. MLA GT Harish Gowda said the day remembers Ambedkar's struggle for education, women's rights and removal of caste discrimination in society. The 135th birth anniversary programme was organised by the taluk administration.

Ramanagara celebrates Ambedkar as knowledge symbol

RAMANAGARA

Municipal Chairman K. Sheshadri (Shashi) said that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is known worldwide as a symbol of knowledge and equality. He said Ambedkar's birth is observed as World Knowledge Day in many places and his life was fully dedicated to equality. He was speaking at a program organized by Karnataka Dalit Sangharsh Samiti at Water Tank Circle in Ramanagara. He said Ambedkar gave India a strong Constitution that supports dignity self-respect and equal rights for all citizens. He added that people today live better lives because of Ambedkar's vision and sacrifice for social justice. He urged youth to follow Ambedkar's ideals and work to remove caste discrimination and build a fair society. Speakers said Ambedkar belonged to all communities and inspired equality across the nation through his teachings. Several leaders and social workers attended the program and paid respect to Ambedkar's contribution to India. He said Ambedkar taught that education is the most powerful tool for personal and social progress. He called on everyone to use education to build confidence, dignity, and independence in life. He said Ambedkar fought against inequality and helped shape a society based on justice and liberty. The leaders present also remembered Ambedkar's role in empowering marginalized communities across the country. They said his vision continues to guide India towards equality, progress, and unity. On this occasion several district officials, social leaders, teachers, and community representatives gathered at the venue and participated in the celebration program.

Bidar MLA honors Ambedkar Jayanti procession celebrations

BIDAR

Bidar South MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale took part in the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Jayanti procession held at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Circle in Bidar city and paid floral tributes after performing special puja. He later joined the procession and walked along with the public, marking the celebration with enthusiasm and respect.Speaking on the occasion, he said that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, is a guiding light for equality, justice and self respect in society. He said Ambedkar was not only a leader but also a movement who fought for rights of the poor backward and oppressed people through education and constitutional values. He added that Ambedkar's teachings of education as power remain relevant and everyone should follow them in daily life. He also said that the Constitution drafted by Dr. Ambedkar ensures equal rights and opportunities for all citizens of India. He called upon youth to study Ambedkar's ideals and contribute towards building a society based on equality, dignity and progress.The event witnessed large participation from citizens, leaders and supporters who gathered to honor Dr. Ambedkar with slogans, cultural programs and tributes.

Gadag Congress Campaign Committee training set

GADAG

The oath-taking and training programme for office bearers of the Gadag District Congress Campaign Committee will be held on April 19 at 11 am at the District Congress Committee office in the Cotton Sale Society premises in Gadag city.

District Congress Campaign Committee President Ashok Mandali said the programme aims to formally induct office bearers and provide organisational training to strengthen party activities at the district level.

He said the event will be inaugurated by Congress Campaign Committee State President Vinaykumar Sorake along with Rona MLA and Karnataka Mineral Development Corporation Limited President G.S. Patil, who is also the District Congress Committee President. The programme will be presided over by State Minister for Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation, Tourism and District In-charge H.K. Patil.

JOURNALIST RECOGNITION EVENT

Journalists conference honors awards appointment

BIDAR

At the 40th State Conference of the Karnataka Working Journalists Association held in Bidar, senior journalist Arun Kumar from the City Highlights English daily was honoured with the Ganeshji Endowment Award. The two-day event was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, while the closing ceremony was attended by Speaker U.T. Khader, district in-charge Minister Ishwar Khandre, Leader of Opposition R. Ashok, MLAs, and association leaders.

State president Shivananda Tagadoor, vice president Madan Gowda, and other office bearers took part in the programme. During the executive meeting on April 12, senior journalist N. Ravikumar of Shivamogga Telex was appointed as State Committee Director. The announcement was made at the general body meeting, where his past roles as district general secretary, president, and state election officer were noted.

The conference emphasised the importance of independent journalism, ethical reporting, and the role of media in strengthening democracy, while bringing together journalists and leaders to discuss responsible news practices.

AMBEDKAR JAYANTI INSPIRES FREE STATIONERY DRIVE

VIJAYAPURA

On the occasion of the 136th birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar, Dalit Swarajya Sene Karnataka Sanghatana organized a free pen and notebook distribution programme for children in several slum areas of Vijayapura city. The initiative aimed to encourage education among underprivileged students and promote awareness about the importance of schooling.Student leaders Akshay Kumar and Kiran Kumar said that providing basic study materials to children is a meaningful effort that can support their education and bring positive change in society. They added that service activities like this help motivate students to continue their studies with confidence.

Organisation president Gowdappa Badigera said that education is a powerful tool to remove ignorance and uplift society. He noted that the programme was held to mark Ambedkar Jayanti and spread his message of education and equality.The distribution was carried out in areas including Kanaki Bazaar, Kumbara Galli, Tippu Nagar, Periyar Nagar and Ramabai Nagar.

PM Modi pushes India pharma innovation transformation forward ahead

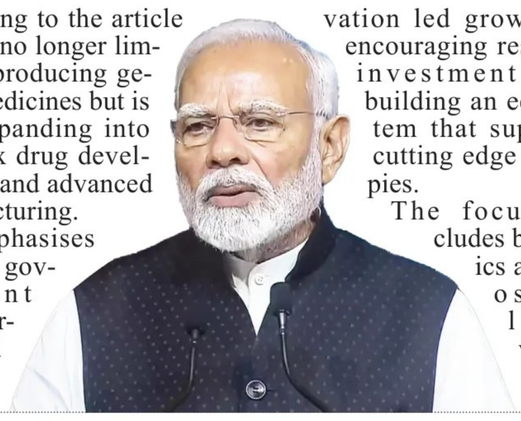
Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's pharma sector is shifting from pharmacy of world to innovation hub

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that India's pharma sector is moving from being known as the pharmacy of the world towards becoming a global hub of innovation and advanced research.

He said the country is increasingly focusing on research and development in pharmaceuticals including biologics, biosimilars and next generation therapies. Modi shared an article written by Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda calling it a must read retrospection on India's pharma journey and future growth path.

He said the article highlights how policy support and government focus have helped reshape the sector in recent years by promoting innovation and investment.



According to the article India is no longer limited to producing generic medicines but is now expanding into complex drug development and advanced manufacturing.

It emphasises that the government has prioritised innovation led growth by encouraging research investment and building an ecosystem that supports cutting edge therapies.

The focus includes biologics and biosimilars which are expected to drive the next phase of growth in the global pharmaceutical industry. Nadda said that India traditionally known as the pharmacy of the world is now ready to shift gears from scale to innovation.

The Prime Minister called the article a key reflection of India's growing role in the global pharmaceutical industry and its expanding capabilities. He said that focus on research, development, and advanced therapies will strengthen India's global position and improve healthcare access.

The government is supporting the sector through policy reforms, investment promotion, and a research-friendly ecosystem. He added that India aims to lead pharma innovation with global partnerships, science, technology, and skilled workforce.

QUICK READ

Bank accounts probed in TCS Nashik case

NASHIK

The bank accounts of accused arrested in the TCS Nashik sexual harassment and alleged religious conversion case are being examined by police to trace the source of funds and check links to illegal activities, sources said on Tuesday. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) is probing complaints by eight women employees alleging harassment and HR inaction. So far, seven staff members have been arrested and suspended, while one woman employee remains absconding. TCS has said it follows a zero-tolerance policy and a detailed inquiry is underway.

Punjab Police Bust Cross-Border Arms Module

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Police on Tuesday said it has dismantled a cross-border illegal arms smuggling module with arrest of three persons and recovery of six pistols in an operation against organised crime in the state. Police said accused were in contact with Pakistan-based smugglers through social media and arranged movement of weapons across border. The firearms were meant for criminal gangs in Punjab. Investigations are ongoing, including forensic tests and digital evidence checks, and more arrests are possible.

Iran Leader's Representative Praises Indian Citizens

AYODHYA

Abdul Majid Hakeem Ilahi, Representative of Iran's Supreme Leader in India, praised Indians for kindness, honesty, and strong human values. He said he was deeply moved by the emotions and dignity shown by people across India during his visit. He noted that India and Iran share civilizational ties going back more than 5000 years, rooted in culture, education, trade, and humanity. He said relations between both countries remain strong, and leaders have held successful talks in recent times.

He mentioned that the Prime Minister of India and the President of Iran have spoken several times, leading to positive outcomes. Foreign ministers of both nations have also held discussions aimed at strengthening cooperation in different fields. He said the relationship is expected to grow further in the coming years through expanded cooperation and dialogue. He also referred to maritime developments, noting that an Indian LPG tanker named Jag Vikram successfully passed through a strategic waterway after a ceasefire between the United States and Iran.

Iran Supreme Leader's representative praises Indians, highlights civilizational ties with India, strong diplomatic relations, and growing cooperation between the two nations across sectors.

The vessel is the ninth Indian ship to navigate the route and is now being escorted towards Indian ports for arrival. This reflects growing maritime activity and improved conditions following diplomatic efforts and regional understandings. He said such developments show rising trust between nations and improved cooperation in trade and security matters across the region.

Ilahi expressed hope that cultural and diplomatic ties will continue to strengthen, benefiting both countries and their people.

Officials said ongoing talks between leaders will boost cooperation in economy, energy, and education, while people-to-people ties strengthen through shared history. Both nations will continue dialogue for peace and global partnership.

Foreign affairs expert Robinder Sachdev says China's tariff stance reflects position of a self-respecting sovereign nation

Hormuz Blockade Impact Unclear Amid US Iran Tensions

NEW DELHI

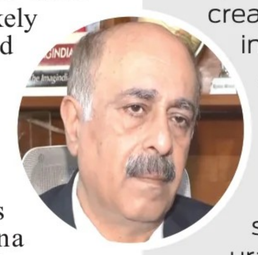
Foreign affairs expert Robinder Sachdev on Tuesday said that the possibility of fresh talks between the United States and Iran appears limited, even though some level of communication continues between the two sides.

He noted that the effectiveness of the US blockade of the Strait of Hormuz will become clearer in the coming days.

Sachdev pointed out that a full-scale military offensive by the US may be difficult, as it could negatively affect both the American economy and the global economy.

He added that Iran has managed to endure sustained pressure, which is also influencing Washington's strategic decisions.

He said there remains a small chance that messages could still be exchanged during the remaining period of the ceasefire, which is expected to last about a week. If discussions do take place, they could likely be held in Islamabad or Geneva, where preliminary groundwork has already been completed.



Meanwhile, Iran's Embassy in Ghana claimed that a Chinese oil tanker was able to pass through the US blockade despite sanctions, raising concerns about how effective the restrictions actually are.

Sachdev said the next few days will be crucial in determining whether tensions escalate further or move towards renewed dialogue.

Foreign policy expert Robinder Sachdev said on Tuesday that China's response to US President Donald Trump's proposed 50% tariffs reflects a sovereign nation's stance and that Trump is using tariffs as a bargaining tool ahead of a possible China visit. He added that European-American relations are entering a period of strain, with divisions over liberal values, defence spending, and policy priorities, creating differing responses across European countries. Sachdev also said Iran-US talks show enriched uranium is the core issue, with the US seeking removal of 60% enriched stockpile and a visible diplomatic victory, while Iran resists concessions over national pride.

Bomb Threat to Trisha Krishnan Found To Be Hoax

CHENNAI

A bomb threat targeting actor Trisha Krishnan caused panic in Chennai on Tuesday after an anonymous caller claimed explosives had been placed at her residence in Alwarpet. Police quickly launched a major security operation following the alert received at the control room.

Teynampet Police, along with the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad, rushed to the spot and conducted a detailed search of the house. Officials checked all areas of the premises as part of standard safety procedures to ensure there was no danger.

After several hours of inspection, police confirmed that no bomb or suspicious material was found and declared the threat a hoax. The announcement brought relief to residents and fans who were worried after news of the incident spread. Authorities have not yet confirmed whether the actor was present at home or away during the time of the threat.

Police have now started an investigation to trace the unidentified caller. Cybercrime teams are examining call records, signal routes, and other digital evidence to identify those responsible. Officials are also looking into whether the act was carried out by an individual or linked to a larger pattern of nuisance calls targeting public figures.

Similar hoax bomb threats have been reported in the past involving well-known Tamil film actors, raising concerns over misuse of emergency services. Police said strict action will be taken once the accused is identified.

Chinese Delegation Visits Dehradun Colleges to Study Education System

NEW DELHI

A Chinese delegation led by Minister-Counsellor Chen Jianjun visited Dehradun in Uttarakhand to understand educational operations in local institutions, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong said.

The team included young diplomats from the Chinese Embassy. During the visit, the delegation met Prof Surekha Dangwal, Vice-Chancellor of Doon University, and attended a Chinese New Year programme organised by the Department of Chinese Studies.

They also visited Government Girls Inter College Kanvaghati and Government Girls Inter College Kotdwar, where they toured campuses and interacted with principals, teachers and students.

Officials said the delegation gained a detailed understanding of how these institutions function.

Meanwhile, an Indian Embassy delegation in Beijing, led by Minister Shweta Singh, visited Beijing Foreign Studies University and interacted with faculty and students studying Indian languages and culture.

Students presented cultural performances, including songs and poetry in Hindi, Bengali and Punjabi, showing strong interest in Indian traditions.

Separately, the Consulate General of India in Guangzhou celebrated the 77th ICCR Day on April 9 with participation from scholars and cultural enthusiasts. Consul General Gince Kuruvilla Mattam highlighted the role of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in promoting Indian culture globally.

Experts said such exchanges help strengthen educational and cultural ties between India and China.

Revanth Reddy Calls for Fair Delimitation Seat Increase

HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday criticised the BJP over the proposed delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies, alleging that it could lead to injustice for Southern states.

He called for a united struggle to ensure that seats are increased on a pro-rata basis rather than reduced under a population-based formula.

Speaking at the birth anniversary celebrations of Dr B R Ambedkar, the Chief Minister said the use of a 50 percent population criterion may lower representation for Southern states and adversely affect women, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes.

He questioned whether Union Ministers were ignoring these concerns and stressed that safeguarding democratic representation is the responsibility of the people.

Reddy said his government would stand at the forefront of any effort aimed at protecting the rights of the region. He paid tribute to Dr Ambedkar, calling him a key architect of modern India, and also praised Mahatma Gandhi, saying both leaders played crucial roles in shaping the nation's path.

The Chief Minister highlighted Ambedkar's belief in education as a powerful tool for social change.

He said the state government is working to expand access to quality education through initiatives such as Telangana Public Schools and Young India Integrated Schools, aimed at reducing social inequalities.

He also recalled the role of marginalised communities in the Telangana movement and acknowledged contributions of cultural figures like Gaddar, whose songs inspired people during the struggle. Reddy said his government is giving top priority to the welfare of Dalits and Adivasis through various policies and programmes.

He added that steps are being taken to ensure equal opportunities, improve representation, and strengthen social justice. The Chief Minister said his administration remains committed to inclusive growth, focusing on education, welfare schemes, and empowerment of weaker sections across the state.

HEALTH AID MISSION

India Sends 13 Tonnes BCG Vaccines to Afghanistan

NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday sent 13 tonnes of Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccines and related dry material to Afghanistan to strengthen its child immunisation programme against tuberculosis, the Ministry of External Affairs said. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the consignment was delivered to Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health to support its vaccination drive for children. India has been consistently providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, including medical supplies and vaccines, even after recent natural disasters.

Earlier this month, India also sent relief materials such as kitchen sets, hygiene kits, tarpaulins, sleeping bags, and plastic sheets for flood and earthquake-hit areas in Afghanistan. Officials said heavy rains and floods had earlier destroyed homes and farmland, affecting thousands of people across several provinces. India reiterated that it stands in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and remains committed to humanitarian support during difficult times.

Afghan authorities have also reacted to international sanctions updates, saying such measures are ineffective and harm ordinary citizens more than leaders. The United Nations Security Council recently updated its sanctions list, revising details of several senior officials under ongoing enforcement measures. India said it will continue cooperation with Afghanistan through health, development, and humanitarian programmes in the future. Officials said the vaccine shipment is part of India's broader health diplomacy and long-standing partnership with Afghanistan's public health system.

The MEA said India's support aims to boost child healthcare and prevent tuberculosis through timely vaccines. This follows earlier disaster aid. India remains a key humanitarian partner, with plans to expand cooperation in research, training, and vaccine development.

QUICK READ

Savukku Shankar Gets Parole for Mother's Funeral

CHENNAI

Greater Chennai Police granted three-day parole to YouTuber Savukku Shankar, detained under the Goondas Act, to attend his mother's funeral in Bengaluru. The parole was approved on humanitarian grounds after his lawyer informed authorities of her death. Officials said the parole runs from April 13 to April 16. Shankar will be escorted under strict security and remain under constant watch. Police said he will be brought back to prison after the parole period, and any violation may invite legal action.

Man Molests Pregnant Woman, CCTV Spurs Hunt

JAIPUR

A shocking harassment case has emerged in Jaipur where a pregnant woman was molested on a street in Beach Colony. The incident occurred on March 25 around 6 PM while she was walking and talking on her phone. An unidentified man followed her and touched her inappropriately before fleeing. The woman raised an alarm but the accused escaped. Police are now examining CCTV footage to identify him. The incident has raised concerns over women's safety in residential areas.

Son Reveals Mother's Murder, Father Arrested

NABARANGPUR

A shocking murder case has surfaced in Borgan village of Odisha, where a man allegedly killed his wife and hid her body in a septic tank. The crime came to light after their four-year-old son told relatives that his father attacked his mother. Police said the accused, Subash Gond, assaulted his wife Manai Gond after a quarrel on April 11. She died on the spot. He then tried to hide the body and mislead others. Police recovered the body and arrested him.

Centre Plans Expanding Lok Sabha Seats to 850 Soon

The Centre is planning a major increase in Lok Sabha seats to strengthen representation and implement women's reservation

NEW DELHI

The Union government has proposed increasing the total number of Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 850, according to sources. Out of these, 815 seats will be allocated to states, while 35 seats will be reserved for Union Territories. This move is linked to the planned implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women under the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, expected to take effect from the 2029 general elections.

To enable this, the government is preparing to introduce a Constitutional amendment bill during a special sitting of Parliament scheduled for April 16, 17, and 18. The session will also discuss changes related to the women's reservation law and the proposed Delimitation Bill. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed to all political parties to support the amendment. He said the law, passed after decades of discussion, aims to ensure stronger representation and rights for women in Parliament and state assemblies. He stressed that there should be no delay in implementing the provision before the 2029 elections. However, opposition parties have raised concerns about the delimitation process. They fear that increasing seats based on population could reduce the representation of southern states. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has strongly opposed the proposal, alleging that the Centre is trying to push the amendment without proper consultation. He warned of large-scale protests if the interests of his state or other southern states are affected.

Delhi Approves Yamuna Flood Protection Wall Project

NEW DELHI

Delhi government plans a strong flood protection wall along Yamuna to safeguard vulnerable areas, prevent water overflow, and provide long-term relief from recurring floods.

The Delhi government has approved a major project to build a flood protection wall along the Yamuna River to prevent recurring floods in the city. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced that the 4.72-kilometre wall will be constructed from Majnu Ka Tila to the Old Railway Bridge. The project is expected to be completed before the next monsoon season.

The decision comes after repeated flooding incidents in the capital. Areas such as Civil Lines, Kashmere Gate, Yamuna Bazaar, and Majnu Ka Tila have been badly affected in the past. Floodwaters often enter through low-lying areas, disrupting traffic and daily life, especially along the Ring Road.

Officials said the new wall will act as a strong barrier to stop river water from entering residential areas. It will also help prevent erosion along the riverbanks and protect nearby roads and buildings. In addition, the structure is expected to reduce illegal dumping of waste along the river, helping protect the environment.

The Chief Minister said earlier measures were temporary and not enough to handle rising water levels. Data shows the Yamuna reached a record level of 208.66 metres in 2023 and crossed danger levels again in 2025.

Gupta said the project will be carried out quickly and aims to provide a long-term solution. She added that the plan will not only control floods but also improve infrastructure and protect the Yamuna ecosystem.

BJP Releases TN Manifesto with Welfare Promises

CHENNAI

The BJP has released its Tamil Nadu election manifesto with welfare promises and criticism of the ruling DMK government.

Party president JP Nadda unveiled the manifesto on Tamil New Year and the 150th birth anniversary of B. R. Ambedkar, calling the occasion special.

He praised Tamil Nadu's rich cultural heritage and mentioned figures like Thiruvalluvar and Subramania Bharati.

The manifesto includes key promises aimed at supporting families and women.

The party has assured Rs 2,000 per month for women heads of households and three free LPG cylinders every year.

It also announced a one-time assistance of Rs 10,000 for each household to manage rising expenses.

For women, the BJP has proposed a subsidy of Rs 25,000 to purchase e-scooters and a 3 per cent stamp duty cut for first-time homebuyers.

The party also promised Rs 2,000 monthly support for people raising jallikattu bulls and Rs 10 lakh compensation in case of death during such events.

Other benefits include coupons worth Rs 8,000 for essential goods and additional household assistance schemes.

The Supreme Court will hear Assam government's plea challenging interim relief granted to Congress leader Pawan Khera

Supreme Court to Hear Assam Plea against Khera Bail

NEW DELHI

The case is scheduled to come up on April 15 before a Bench of Justices J.K. Maheshwari and Atul S. Chandurkar. The Assam government has filed a Special Leave Petition against the Telangana High Court's April 10 order granting transit anticipatory bail to Khera for one week.

The Telangana High Court had allowed Khera protection from arrest so he could approach a proper court for regular bail. The case relates to alleged defamatory remarks made by Khera against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sarma.

Khera had moved the Telangana High Court after Assam Police registered a case against him under several sections, including defamation, forgery, and criminal conspiracy. The court granted him temporary relief in case of arrest.

During the hearing, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Khera, argued that the case was politically motivated and aimed at targeting him for questioning the Chief Minister. He said the allegations, even if incorrect, would amount to defamation and not justify arrest.

Opposing this, Assam Advocate General Devajit Saikia argued that Khera should have approached courts in Assam, as he had no strong reason to seek relief in Telangana. The issue has led to a political clash between the BJP and Congress, especially ahead of the Assam Assembly elections. Congress leaders have supported Khera, while the Assam government has defended its action.

Rajasthan Launches Drive to Replace Derogatory Student Names

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government has started a special campaign to change unusual or derogatory names of students in schools. The initiative, called "Sarthak Naam Abhiyan," aims to replace such names with meaningful and respectful alternatives.

School Education Minister Madan Dilawar said names play an important role in shaping a child's identity and confidence. He noted that names like "Sheru" or "Shaitan" can lead to embarrassment and affect self-esteem as children grow older.

Under the campaign, the education department has identified around 2,000 to 3,000 such names in government and private schools. It has prepared a list of nearly 3,000 meaningful names, including 1,541 for girls and 1,409 for boys, along with their meanings. This list will be shared with parents.

Officials believe that negative or inappropriate names can harm a child's mental development and social identity. Schools have been asked to approach the issue sensitively and discuss it with parents during meetings. School Management Committees will also help encourage parents to choose better names. The minister also stressed removing caste-based or offensive words from records and replacing them with respectful terms.

New Highway Rules Impose Higher Fees On Overloaded Vehicles

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified new rules to regulate fees on overloaded vehicles using National Highways, aiming to improve safety and protect road infrastructure.

The National Highways Fee Fourth Amendment Rules, 2026, will come into effect from April 15.

Under the revised system, vehicles carrying up to 10 percent excess load will not face any additional charges.

However, those with overload between 10 percent and 40 percent will be charged twice the base fee, while vehicles exceeding 40 percent overload will pay four times the base rate.

Officials said the move is designed to encourage compliance with load limits and reduce road damage. The rules specify that overloading will be measured using certified weighing devices installed at toll plazas.

If such facilities are not available, no overload fee will be charged.

Authorities also stated that all payments for overload charges will be collected through FASTag, ensuring digital and transparent transactions.

Details of overloaded vehicles will be recorded and shared with the National Vehicle Register, VAHAN, for monitoring and enforcement. Vehicles without a valid FASTag will face penalties as per existing rules.

The amendment also includes clear examples to explain how overload charges will be calculated for different vehicle categories.

MUSHROOM FARMING BOOSTS RURAL WOMEN'S INCOME GROWTH

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government's push for alternative farming and women-led entrepreneurship is changing rural livelihoods, with mushroom cultivation emerging as a profitable option. In Bhadohi district, Pappu Devi has become a successful example, earning between Rs 8 lakh and Rs 10 lakh annually through mushroom farming.

Traditionally, farmers in the region depended on crops like wheat and paddy. However, with support from the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (UPSRLM), Pappu Devi shifted to this high-value farming activity. She started her venture with an investment of about Rs 2.5 lakh from her savings and a loan of Rs 50,000. With training and technical guidance, she gradually expanded her business into a stable source of income. The Rural Livelihood Mission has played a key role in supporting women by offering training, financial help, and market guidance. It has encouraged many women to take up self-employment and improve their financial independence.

Pappu Devi's success has also benefited her village. She has created jobs for several women, who now work in cultivation, packaging, and marketing. Her journey has inspired many self-help groups and rural women to explore similar opportunities.

Officials say such initiatives are part of the state government's broader plan to diversify agriculture, increase rural incomes, and empower women. Mushroom farming is being promoted as a low-cost, high-return activity suitable for small farmers.

LOAN GROWTH SURGE

Gold Loans See Massive Growth across India

NEW DELHI

Gold loans in India have recorded strong growth over the past three years, with rising demand and wider acceptance among borrowers. A report by TransUnion CIBIL shows that gold loan balances have increased nearly four times since March 2022. Their share in the retail credit market has also grown from 5.9 per cent to about 11 per cent by December 2025, making it one of the largest credit segments.

The average loan size has almost doubled during this period. It rose from about Rs 1.1 lakh in March 2022 to nearly Rs 1.9 lakh by December 2025. The average ticket size also increased from Rs 90,000 in early 2022 to around Rs 1.96 lakh by the end of 2025. This shows that borrowers are taking larger loans against their gold assets.

The report states that this growth is driven by more people choosing gold loans, higher loan amounts, and increased participation by lenders. Public sector banks have strengthened their share from 57 per cent to 62 per cent, while NBFCs have also expanded their presence in this segment.

Borrower profiles are also changing. The share of prime and above-prime borrowers has increased from 43 per cent in 2022 to about 52 per cent in 2025. At the same time, the number of new-to-credit borrowers has reduced, showing a more stable and mature customer base. Women borrowers have emerged as a key driver, making up 39 per cent of loan originations in 2025.

Borrowers are also taking higher overall loans, with average outstanding amounts rising from Rs 1.9 lakh in 2022 to Rs 3.1 lakh in 2025. However, experts have raised concerns about rising risks. Delinquency rates are higher among borrowers with larger loans, indicating the need for careful monitoring by lenders.

NHRC Seeks Report over Bhopal Waqf Properties Row

NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission has sought an Action Taken Report from the Madhya Pradesh government and central authorities over alleged irregularities in Waqf properties linked to Bhopal in Mecca and Medina. The report has been asked within two weeks.

A Bench led by member Priyank Kanoongo took note of a complaint regarding mismanagement of Rubat properties meant for Hajj pilgrims from Bhopal. The complaint alleged negligence and financial irregularities by Mutawalli Saba Ali Khan Pataudi and associate Sikandar Hafeez. It claimed that failure to properly represent the Waqf before Saudi authorities led to loss of control over these properties, affecting accommodation facilities for poor pilgrims. Allegations also include illegal fund transfers, lack of transparency in audits, violations of foreign exchange rules, and misuse of facilities. The complainant has sought a high-level probe involving the Central Waqf Council and Indian Embassy, removal of the current Mutawalli, and a forensic audit of financial transactions.

The NHRC observed that the matter raises serious human rights concerns and issued notices to several authorities, including the Madhya Pradesh Chief Secretary, Revenue Department, Ministry of External Affairs, Minority Affairs Ministry, and the State Waqf Board.

Authorities have also been asked to verify ownership status of the properties since Partition and clarify any irregularities.

QUICK READ

Russian drone strike hits Ukraine port

Odesa
Russian drones attacked Ukraine's Izmail port in the Odesa region, damaging infrastructure and civilian vessels, officials said. The strike hit a foreign flagged ship and key logistics facilities used for wartime trade. Another merchant vessel carrying grain was also damaged during separate attacks, though no casualties were reported on board. Local authorities said nearby areas suffered heavy damage, including burned vehicles, a repair workshop, and several homes. One person was hospitalised in the wider region. Ukraine said its air defence systems intercepted most incoming missiles and drones, while port operations continued despite the ongoing strikes and disruptions.

Taiwan reports increased Chinese military activity

Taipei
Taiwan's defence ministry said it detected multiple Chinese military movements near its territory, including nine aircraft sorties, six naval vessels, and three official ships operating around its waters. Several of the aircraft reportedly entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone, prompting monitoring and response measures by the island's armed forces. Taiwan continues to track regular military activity from China, which views the island as part of its territory. However, Taiwan operates with its own government and military, maintaining separate governance since 1949. Authorities said the situation remains under close watch amid ongoing regional tensions and repeated incursions.

Teen school shooting shocks Southeastern Turkey region

Siverek
A teenage former student opened fire at a high school in Turkey's Sanliurfa province, injuring at least 16 people before taking his own life, officials said. The attacker used a shotgun and fired inside the school yard and building, causing panic among students and teachers. Victims, including students, teachers, a police officer and staff, were taken to hospital, with some in serious condition. Authorities said the suspect had no prior criminal record and the school was previously considered safe. Investigations are ongoing as the community mourns and security measures are reviewed across schools in the region.

Kazakh protest conviction sparks global outcry

The East Turkistan Government-in-Exile condemned Kazakhstan for convicting 19 activists who protested against China's treatment of ethnic Kazakhs.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The East Turkistan Government-in-Exile (ETGE) has issued a fierce condemnation following the conviction of 19 Kazakh citizens. The activists were sentenced for participating in an anti-China protest held last year near the border. They were demanding the release of an ethnic Kazakh man who they claim is being held illegally in China's Xinjiang region.

A court in Kazakhstan found the group guilty of "inciting inter-ethnic discord." The protest involved the symbolic burning of a Chinese flag and a portrait of President Xi Jinping. While the court viewed these acts as a crime, the ETGE described the demonstration as a desperate "cry for justice." They claim China is running concentration camps and slave factories where Turkic peoples face torture and death.

The exiled authorities are now accusing the Kazakhstan government of caving to pressure from Beijing. They argue that a truly independent nation would not arrest its own citizens for speaking out against genocide. "This is not justice but capitulation to Chinese imperialism," the ETGE stated, claiming that trade deals are being prioritized over the lives of Turkic kin.

The ETGE is calling for the immediate release of all 19 activists and the removal of all charges. Furthermore, they are urging the United Nations and the Organization of Turkic States to take a stand. They want the international community to recognize Xinjiang as an occupied territory and to intervene in what they describe as a brutal campaign of colonization and genocide by the Chinese regime.

Military shelling kills twelve in Balochistan

QUETTA

A tragic military operation in the Barkhan district of Balochistan has left at least 12 civilians dead, including women and children. Local reports indicated that the Pakistani military launched heavy shelling and bombardment in the area following an earlier clash with unidentified armed men.

The violence began when armed groups reportedly attacked security forces, killing 12 personnel. In response, the military carried out a large scale sweep of nearby civilian areas. Witnesses claimed that during the operation, a vehicle containing several individuals was set on fire, though these reports have not yet been officially confirmed by independent sources. This incident follows a similar drone strike last week in the Mastung district that killed a young man and injured several women in their home.

The loss of innocent life has drawn sharp criticism from human rights groups and political leaders. Tara Chand, President of the Baloch American Congress, condemned the military's actions, stating that harming civilians is a shameful act for any army. Other organizations, including the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, have expressed grave concern over the recurring use of heavy weaponry and drones in residential areas.

The situation in Balochistan remains tense as armed groups continue to clash with the military. Families of the victims are calling for an immediate end to the violence and are demanding that the government protect civilians from being caught in the crossfire. As the conflict escalates, the international community is being urged to watch the region closely to prevent further humanitarian disasters.

At least 12 civilians died during a military operation in Balochistan, while Islamabad residents protest mounting roadblocks and police checkpoints following a high-profile killing.

Roadblocks and check posts anger Islamabad residents

ISLAMABAD: Residents of Pakistan's capital are voicing frustration over heavy police check posts and road blockades across the city. Many say daily travel has become difficult due to long queues, repeated vehicle checks, and traffic jams. Commuters report delays affecting schools, offices, and hospitals. A resident said the situation feels more like harassment than security. Public anger has grown further after the recent killing of a well-known businessman. Traders and citizens are demanding that checkpoints be limited to entry and exit points instead of inside the city. They argue that too many barriers create inconvenience and may even help criminals escape. Police officials say the measures follow intelligence warnings about possible threats. They have acknowledged complaints and promised to review some checkpoints. Recent security restrictions in key areas have also added to travel problems for residents.

Investigations reveal ISI spying on Indian toll plazas and a shift toward local printing of drone-dropped fake currency.

Spy cameras target India's critical highway points

INDIA

Recent investigations into a major spying case have revealed a chilling new target for foreign intelligence, India's highway toll plazas. Officials found that the ISI, Pakistan's spy agency, ordered its operatives to install secret cameras at these busy transit points to monitor traffic and security in real time.

The goal was to mine data on how goods and security forces move across the country. Experts warn that this information is gold for criminals and terrorists. By watching toll plazas, these groups could plan ambushes, time the smuggling of drugs and weapons, or even coordinate car bomb attacks. Real-time footage would allow them to see exactly when security is light or when high value targets are passing through.

This discovery follows the busting of a module in Ghaziabad that was trying to set up cameras at 50 sensitive spots, including military bases and railway stations. In fact, two cameras were secretly streaming live video from Delhi and Sonipat stations for 15 days before they were caught. The operatives involved were reportedly paid small sums between ₹8,000 and ₹10,000 to install these solar-powered devices in public areas.

As a result of this scare, the Indian government is now conducting a massive security audit. Authorities are especially worried about the safety of CCTV cameras made in China, fearing they might have "backdoors" that allow foreign hackers to peek in. Security agencies are now working overtime to ensure that the 1,000+ toll plazas that serve as India's economic lifelines remain safe from prying eyes.

Criminal syndicates use drones to drop fake currency

NEW DELHI: Indian security agencies have reported a sharp rise in fake currency seizures, pointing to a shift in how criminal networks operate. Officials say a syndicate linked to Dawood Ibrahim is now asking its members in India to print counterfeit notes locally instead of smuggling them across borders. Tighter security along routes through Pakistan and Bangladesh has made cross border movement difficult. As a result, small but frequent printing units are being set up in states like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab. Authorities say these groups are changing locations often to avoid being caught. Earlier, a major unit in West Bengal's Malda was shut down, reducing production significantly. Meanwhile, the use of drones to drop fake currency is increasing. Recent seizures suggest smaller deliveries are being tested. Officials warn that the aim is to fund illegal activities and harm the economy.

Karachi residents suffer amid unannounced gas cuts

ISLAMABAD

Residents of Karachi are facing severe daily disruptions as unannounced gas outages leave kitchens cold across the city. Despite claims from the reports that supply is maintained during peak meal times, families report that gas is frequently cut without warning, forcing them to rely on expensive and scarce alternatives.

The crisis has turned daily life into a "chaotic" struggle, according to local residents. With home stoves failing, many are rushing to roadside vendors or overcrowded LPG stations. However, finding fuel is becoming nearly impossible, long queues are now common, and many shops have completely run out of LPG canisters. Frustrated citizens have taken to social media to criticize the utility company for failing to provide even a basic schedule for the cuts, leaving them unable to prepare meals for their children or guests.

The gas shortage is also hitting pockets hard. As natural gas disappears, "tandoor" owners have switched to expensive LPG to keep their ovens running. This has forced them to hike the price of basic bread, roti and chapatti by five rupees. In a city already struggling with high inflation, a simple roti now costs up to PKR 30, adding a heavy financial burden to the average household.

While the reports say that the duty is being fulfilled, the reality on the ground tells a different story of shut down kitchens and rising food costs. Residents are now urgently calling on the government to intervene, demanding both a reliable gas supply and immediate action to control the soaring prices of essential food items.

Xi proposes four-point plan for Middle East peace

BEIJING

China has unveiled new details of Xi Jinping's "four-point plan" aimed at bringing long term stability to the Middle East. Mao Ning shared the framework following a high-level meeting in Beijing between Xi and Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The proposal focuses on peaceful coexistence, sovereignty, international law, and the link between growth and safety. China urges Gulf nations to build cooperative security systems instead of rivalry, while respecting borders and protecting critical infrastructure, especially in fragile regions. Xi called for strict adherence to the United Nations Charter as the foundation for peace. He emphasized that development and security are closely connected. China says the plan aims to reduce tensions, build trust, and expand its diplomatic role, positioning itself as a mediator and stabilizing force in regional and global affairs.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

		9	6			4		3
5	1			3		2		7
2	6	3		1	7	8	5	
	2	6				3	9	8
9	4	5		8	6	7	2	
		8	7		2	5		6
6		2			3		7	4
3	5		1	6		9		2
4		1	2	7	8		3	5

4	9	7	2	5	6	3	1	8
3	5	2	8	4	1	7	9	6
1	8	6	7	3	9	5	4	2
8	3	9	4	6	2	1	5	7
7	2	1	5	9	8	4	6	3
6	4	5	3	1	7	8	2	9
5	7	4	6	2	3	9	8	1
2	1	3	9	8	5	6	7	4
9	6	8	1	7	4	2	3	5

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

OPENAI SECURITY BREACH

Suspect target list hits AI leaders

SAN FRANCISCO

A 20-year-old Texas man is facing serious state and federal charges after allegedly attacking the home of OpenAI CEO Sam Altman. The suspect, Daniel Alejandro Moreno Gama, reportedly traveled across the country to carry out a violent mission against leaders in the artificial intelligence industry. Authorities say the attack involved a Molotov cocktail thrown at Altman's residence in the Russian Hill neighborhood early on April 10.

Following the house attack, Moreno Gama allegedly moved on to OpenAI's headquarters. Prosecutors claim he tried to smash the building's glass doors with a chair, threatening to burn the office down and kill anyone inside. When police arrested him, they found a disturbing "target list" of various AI executives and investors. He was also carrying kerosene, a lighter, and other explosive materials, suggesting a much larger plan for violence.

Federal officials have charged him with attempted destruction of property using explosives and possessing an unregistered firearm. If convicted, he could spend up to 20 years in prison for the explosives charges alone. The San Francisco District Attorney is also pursuing state charges, including two counts of attempted murder. Prosecutors are asking the court to keep him in jail without bail, citing him as a major threat to public safety.

The FBI warned that this case represents a "deeply concerning escalation" of violence against technology leaders. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche emphasized that disagreement over new technology is never an excuse for violence. Officials added that if the investigation proves the suspect was trying to change public policy through fear, the case will be prosecuted as domestic terrorism.

Nepal welcomes New Year 2083

KATHMANDU

The streets of Nepal are alive with joy as the nation celebrates the arrival of the New Year 2083 according to the Bikram Sambat calendar. The first day of the month of Baishakh is more than just a date on the wall, it is a profound cultural and spiritual milestone for millions. Families are gathering to exchange warm greetings, while temples and monasteries are crowded with people offering prayers for a peaceful year ahead.

President Ram Chandra Poudel marked the occasion by calling for a renewed national spirit. In his official address, he reminded citizens that success and prosperity do not happen by accident but through discipline and hard work. He emphasized that the Bikram Sambat calendar is a vital link to Nepal's rich history and social values. Looking back on the past year, the President noted that recent elections have brought much needed political stability, allowing a new government to focus on the public's real needs.

For many, the day is a time for personal reflection. People across the country are setting new goals and resolutions, hoping to leave behind old mistakes and start fresh with "renewed energy." The President echoed this sentiment, urging leaders to prioritize good governance, social justice, and the rule of law. He expressed his hope that 2083 would be a year of unity and cooperation, helping the nation move toward a more prosperous future. As the celebrations continue into the night, the message from the capital remains clear: this is a year for collective commitment and national progress.

Noah Okafor scores twice as Leeds stun Manchester United at Old Trafford

Okafor Brace Ends Leeds' 45-Year Wait for League Win at Manchester United

MANCHESTER

Noah Okafor starred with a brilliant first-half brace as Leeds United secured a historic 2-1 victory over Manchester United at Old Trafford, ending a 45-year wait for a league win at the iconic venue and boosting their Premier League survival hopes.

Leeds, battling relegation, produced a spirited performance to claim their first top-flight win against United since 2002 and their first league triumph at Old Trafford since 1981. The result also marked their first victory in seven league matches, lifting Daniel Farke's side six points clear of the relegation zone with six games remaining.

Okafor capitalised on Manchester United's defensive frailties early in the match. He opened the scoring in the fifth minute, pouncing on a loose ball after a dangerous cross from Jayden Bogle caused confusion in the United defence. The Swiss forward struck again in the 29th minute, benefiting from another defensive lapse as his effort deflected past goalkeeper Senne Lammens.

United's struggles were compounded in the second half when Lisandro Martinez was sent off in the 56th minute for pulling the hair of Leeds striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin, following a VAR review. The dismissal left the hosts with 10 men and further dented their chances of a comeback.

Despite the setback, United responded through Casemiro, who reduced the deficit in the 69th minute with a powerful header from Bruno Fernandes' cross. Fernandes' assist marked his 17th of the season, bringing him closer to the Premier League single-season record.

Leeds had opportunities to extend their lead, with Calvert-Lewin missing a clear chance, while goalkeeper Karl Darlow made crucial saves late in the game to deny United an equaliser. The visitors held firm under pressure in a tense finish to secure a memorable victory.

After the match, United interim manager Michael Carrick criticised referee Paul Tierney's decision to send off Martinez, calling it one of the worst he had seen and hinting at a possible appeal.

The defeat was a setback for United in their push for Champions League qualification, though they remain third in the table, while Leeds celebrated a landmark win that could prove vital in their fight to stay in the Premier League.

'Embrace It': Arteta Rejects Fatigue Excuse, Urges Arsenal to Bounce Back

LONDON

Mikel Arteta calls for resilience as Arsenal aim to revive campaign.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has dismissed fatigue as an excuse for his side's recent struggles, urging his players to respond strongly as they prepare for a crucial Champions League quarter-final second leg against Sporting Lisbon.

The Gunners head into Wednesday's clash at the Emirates Stadium with a narrow 1-0 advantage from the first leg in Lisbon. However, their form has dipped alarmingly, with three defeats in their last four matches across competitions, raising concerns at a decisive stage of the season.

Arsenal's slump has already cost them two potential trophies. They were beaten 2-0 by Manchester City in the League Cup final and suffered a shock FA Cup quarter-final exit at the hands of second-tier Southampton. Adding to their woes, a 2-1 home defeat against Bournemouth has dented their Premier League title hopes, leaving them just six points ahead of second-placed City, who also have a game in hand.

With a high-stakes league clash against City looming this weekend, Arteta faces a delicate balancing act in team selection. He must decide whether to field his strongest XI against Sporting or rotate players to keep them fresh for the title-defining encounter. Despite a demanding schedule that has seen Arsenal play 54 matches this season, Arteta refused to blame tiredness for the team's dip in form.

"We have to embrace it," he said, stressing that the team must adapt to the relentless calendar and maintain intensity.

He also pointed to a lack of enjoyment and fighting spirit in recent performances, insisting that Arsenal must rediscover their energy and resilience in difficult moments.

Injuries have compounded Arsenal's problems, with key players like Martin Odegaard, Bukayo Saka and Jurrien Timber unavailable.

However, striker Viktor Gyokeres has been a bright spot, scoring 18 goals this season, including a penalty against Bournemouth.

As Arsenal chase their first Champions League title, Arteta emphasised the importance of seizing the moment. With crucial fixtures ahead, he called on his squad to regroup quickly, embrace the challenge, and deliver a performance worthy of their ambitions on the European stage.

Swimming Lifts Ban on Russian Athletes, Allows Flag and Anthem Return

LAUSANNE

Swimming has become the first major Olympic sport to fully lift restrictions on Russian and Belarusian athletes, with governing body World Aquatics allowing them to compete under their national flags and anthems in international events.

The decision represents a significant policy shift ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and comes after years of restrictions imposed following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Previously, athletes from Russia and Belarus were only permitted to compete as neutrals, subject to strict eligibility checks.

In its announcement, World Aquatics said that senior athletes from both countries would now be treated the same as competitors from other nations, marking a return to full participation.

"Athletes with Russian or Belarusian nationality will be permitted to compete with their respective uniforms, flags and anthems," the governing body stated.

World Aquatics president Husain Al Musallam defended the move, emphasising the importance of sport as a unifying platform.

He said the organisation aims to ensure that aquatic events remain spaces where athletes from all nations can compete peacefully.

The decision follows a gradual easing of restrictions over the past year, beginning with limited neutral participation and later extending to junior athletes.

Federation acts on racism allegations during ISL match involving Kerala Blasters

AIFF Refers Alleged Racial Abuse Complaints in ISL to Disciplinary Committee

NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has referred complaints of alleged racial abuse during the ongoing Indian Super League (ISL) to its Disciplinary Committee, following strong objections raised by Kerala Blasters over an incident involving one of their players.

The controversy stems from an April 11 match at the Kanteerava Stadium, where Kerala Blasters defender Fallou Ndiaye was allegedly subjected to racist chants by sections of the home crowd during their 2-1 win over Bengaluru FC. Videos of the incident have since circulated widely on social media, sparking outrage across the football community.

In an official statement, the AIFF reaffirmed its zero-tolerance stance on racism and confirmed that the matter has been escalated for formal investigation. "The AIFF has received certain complaints regarding alleged racist conduct against players during the ongoing ISL 2025-26. We stand firmly with players and uphold their right to participate in the game free from discrimination," the federation said.

The governing body added that the case has been referred to its Disciplinary Committee, an independent judicial authority, for examination under the AIFF Disciplinary Code. The federation also stated that it would refrain from further comment until the proceedings are complete. Kerala Blasters strongly condemned the incident, describing it as "appalling" and confirming that the club has formally lodged a complaint with both ISL and AIFF authorities. The club emphasised its commitment to protecting its players and maintaining the integrity of the sport.

Bengaluru FC also issued a statement denouncing the alleged behaviour of their supporters. The club said it is working with relevant authorities to identify those responsible and take appropriate action. "Racism is unacceptable and has no place in our sport," the statement read, urging fans to uphold values of respect and sportsmanship.

The incident has once again highlighted the need for stricter enforcement of anti-racism measures in Indian football. With the matter now under review, the AIFF's response is expected to set a precedent for handling such issues in the future.

Marie-Louise Eta Makes History as First Woman to Lead Bundesliga Men's Team

BERLIN

Union Berlin have made history by appointing Marie-Louise Eta as the first woman to take charge of a men's team in the Bundesliga, marking a groundbreaking moment across Europe's top five football leagues.

Union Berlin appoints Eta as interim coach in landmark moment for football

The 34-year-old takes over as interim head coach following the dismissal of Steffen Baumgart after a disappointing run of results. Eta now faces the immediate challenge of steering the club to safety, with five matches remaining in the season as Union Berlin battle to secure their top-flight status.

Her appointment is widely seen as a milestone in football, as she becomes the first woman to manage a men's team in any of Europe's "big five" leagues — England, Spain, Germany, Italy, and France. Eta had already broken barriers in 2023 when she became the Bundesliga's first female assistant coach. Prior to this role, Eta was in charge of Union Berlin's Under-19 men's team and was set to become head coach of the club's women's side next season. However, the club has now entrusted her with a high-pressure assignment as they look to arrest a slump in form. Union's sporting director Horst Heldt said the decision was driven by urgency, with the team struggling in the second half of the season. The club has managed just two wins in 14 matches since the winter break, leaving them in 11th place and only seven points above the relegation zone.

Eta expressed confidence in her squad and emphasised the importance of unity during a difficult phase. "I'm happy that the club has entrusted me with this task. Union's strength has always been in sticking together, and I believe we can get the points we need," she said.

Her leadership will be closely watched, not only for its immediate impact on Union's survival hopes but also for its broader significance in breaking gender barriers in elite men's football.Union Berlin's next match against Wolfsburg, another side fighting relegation, will be a crucial test as Eta begins her historic tenure on the Bundesliga touchline.

Tejaswin Shankar Slams Delay in National Sports Awards, Calls It 'Disrespectful'

NEW DELHI

India's leading decathlete Tejaswin Shankar has strongly criticised the delay in announcing the National Sports Awards, calling it "disrespectful" and demotivating for athletes who have already been recommended for honours. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has reportedly put the awards process on hold despite the selection committee submitting its final list in December. The delay, now stretching nearly four months, is due to a fresh round of scrutiny aimed at ensuring that only the most deserving candidates are recognised.

Reacting to the development, Shankar took to social media to express his frustration. He questioned the timing of the re-evaluation, stating that such measures should have been implemented before the recommended names were made public. According to him, the prolonged uncertainty undermines the credibility of the process and affects athletes and coaches alike.

Sources within the ministry, however, defended the move, emphasising the need to preserve the prestige of the awards. Officials indicated that the Arjuna Award nominations, which include 24 athletes, are currently under review to ensure that the recognition is reserved for those with truly outstanding achievements.

Among the prominent names in contention are teenage chess prodigy Divya Deshmukh and Yogasana athlete Aarti Pal, reflecting the growing diversity in India's sporting landscape. Meanwhile, hockey star Hardik Singh is reportedly the sole nominee for the prestigious Khel Ratna award.

AYUSH SHETTY EYES NEXT LEAP AFTER BREAKTHROUGH RUN AT ASIA CHAMPIONSHIPS

NINGBO

Indian badminton prospect Ayush Shetty has set his sights on the next big step in his career after a remarkable run at the Badminton Asia Championships, where he finished runner-up following a loss to world No. 2 Shi Yuqi in the final.

The 20-year-old went down 8-21, 10-21 in the title clash but still emerged as one of the standout performers of the tournament. His silver medal marked a historic achievement, as he became the first Indian men's singles player in six decades to reach the final of the continental event.

What made Ayush's campaign particularly impressive was his consistency against elite opposition. He defeated three top-10 players — Li Shifeng, Jonatan Christie, and Kunlavut Vitidsarn — showcasing maturity and tactical growth rarely seen at his age.

His victories were built not just on power but also on control and composure. Ayush displayed excellent rally construction, patience in building points, and the ability to handle pressure in crucial moments. These qualities were especially evident in his hard-fought quarter-final win over Christie and his comeback semi-final triumph against Vitidsarn.

However, the final against Shi Yuqi proved a different challenge. The Chinese star dictated play with superior control of pace and placement, limiting Ayush's attacking opportunities. A series of unforced errors further hindered the Indian's chances as he struggled to find rhythm.

Reflecting on the loss, Ayush admitted that his opponent was clearly better on the day. His coach, Sagar Chopda, pointed out that the youngster lacked the patience he had shown in earlier rounds, particularly in the opening stages of the final.

Standing at 6'4", Ayush fits the mould of the modern men's singles player. His powerful smash remains a key weapon, but his improved net play, faster transitions, and better emotional control were the highlights of his performance throughout the tournament.

Oil Prices Drop 3% on Hopes of US-Iran Talks Easing Tensions

Global oil prices dropped 3 percent as hopes for US-Iran peace talks eased fears of a Middle East blockade.

MUMBAI

Global oil prices dropped by 3 percent as investors felt hopeful that new talks between the United States and Iran could end their recent conflict. This optimism helped calm fears that oil supplies would be cut off by the ongoing military blockade in the Middle East.

Brent crude, the international standard, fell to $96.60 per barrel. Meanwhile, American oil, known as WTI, dropped even further to $95.69. Just days ago, prices had jumped by 8 percent after

President Trump announced a naval blockade of Iranian ports. However, the mood shifted when the President mentioned that Iran "wants to make a deal," suggesting a peaceful solution might be close.

The situation remains tense near the Strait of Hormuz. New reports show the blockade is spreading toward the Arabian Sea, and tracking data confirmed that at least two large ships had to turn around. Despite these physical barriers, the financial markets are betting on diplomacy rather than war.

While oil prices slipped, other investments saw a boost from the news. Gold and silver prices both rose as traders moved their money around, and Bitcoin hit its highest price in a month. In India, they are expected to react to these global changes when trading begins. For now, the world is watching closely to see if a handshake will replace the ships currently guarding the high seas.

QUICK READ

Fuel freeze deepens losses for oil companies

New Delhi

State-run fuel companies are facing heavy losses as petrol and diesel prices remain unchanged despite rising costs. Losses have reached about Rs 18 per litre on petrol and Rs 35 on diesel, sources said. Companies like Indian Oil, BPCL and HPCL have not revised prices since April 2022. Meanwhile, global crude oil prices have been unstable, rising sharply after geopolitical tensions. At one point last month, daily losses touched Rs 2,400 crore. A government duty cut helped reduce losses to around Rs 1,600 crore per day, but consumers have not seen any price relief.

India AI growth boosts Southeast Asia tech

New Delhi

India's fast-growing artificial intelligence infrastructure is expected to support, not replace, Southeast Asian tech hubs like Singapore and Malaysia, a new report said. Experts at the Gitex AI Asia 2026 event noted India's large scale can help test and expand AI solutions across Asia. Industry leaders said India offers cost-efficient growth and stable conditions for global demand. Expanding data centres are also helping companies manage supply issues. However, rising AI use has sparked concerns about data privacy. The government-backed IndiaAI Mission is supporting local development by lowering computing costs and encouraging research nationwide.

Just Dial profit falls despite revenue growth

Mumbai

Just Dial reported a sharp 36.6 per cent drop in net profit for the fourth quarter of FY26, even as revenue showed steady growth. Profit fell to Rs 100 crore from Rs 160 crore a year ago. However, revenue rose to Rs 307.2 crore. The decline was mainly due to a significant fall in other income. User traffic also slipped during the quarter. Despite this, the company expanded its listings and strengthened its financial position. Officials said the firm is focusing on artificial intelligence tools to improve its platform and drive future growth across markets.

Indian firms go global despite risks

NEW DELHI

Nearly 100% of Indian firms are eyeing global expansion by 2026, leveraging AI and calculated risks to target high-growth markets like the UAE and North America.

A massive shift is happening in the Indian business world. Nearly 100 percent of Indian companies are now planning to expand their operations into international markets. According to a new report, an incredible 98 percent of local firms intend to increase their global trade and investment over the next five years. This is the highest level of ambition found in any market surveyed worldwide.

Despite wars and political tensions making the world feel less stable, Indian leaders are becoming more courageous. About 94 percent of respondents said they are now more willing to take "calculated risks" than they were just five years ago. This shows a growing confidence that Indian businesses can handle the permanent "economic volatility" that 95 percent of these leaders now expect as a normal part of life.

To prepare for this future, 91 percent of companies have completely changed how they spend their money. They are moving away from safer, slower areas and putting their capital into high-growth regions. The most popular destinations for these expanding firms include the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the UK, and North America.

Technology is also playing a huge role in these decisions. Indian firms are leading the world in using AI and data infrastructure to choose where they should grow. Most leaders also believe that digital assets and infrastructure will completely reshape how global markets work by 2035. As of now, India is becoming a dynamic force that is fundamentally changing how global growth is captured.

Adani Green Energy Limited has achieved India's highest-ever sustainability rating, setting a new national benchmark for green energy leadership.

Adani Green Sets Record with India's Highest ESG Sustainability Score

AHMEDABAD

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) has made history by achieving the highest sustainability rating ever given to an Indian company. The firm received an impressive score of 87.3. This score places the renewable energy giant at the very top of the list for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance in the country.

The high rating proves that Adani Green is a leader in managing climate risks and protecting natural resources. The experts who gave the score looked at everything from how the company saves water to how it handles waste and protects local wildlife. They found that the company doesn't just build solar and wind farms, it also follows very strict rules to ensure its business helps the planet and treats people fairly.

Being number one in ESG is about more than just a good reputation. It helps the company borrow money more easily from global investors who only want to fund "green" projects. Adani Green's CEO, Ashish Khanna, said this win shows that big energy projects can be both successful and responsible. He noted that the company is already certified as "net water-positive" and "single-use plastic-free."

This achievement is part of a larger plan for the Adani Group to focus more on sustainability across all its businesses, including ports and logistics. By proving they can lead in green energy, they are showing the world that Indian infrastructure is ready for a cleaner, more transparent future.

New rules turn iron waste into wealth

NEW DELHI

The Indian government has rewritten the rules for iron ore to ensure that nothing goes to waste. The Ministry of Mines announced new pricing guidelines designed to encourage companies to use low grade ore that was previously thrown away as "rubbish."

In the past, any rocks with less than 45 percent iron content were treated as waste. Because there was no specific price for this low quality material, the government charged high royalties based on much better ore. This made it too expensive for companies to try and clean or "fix" the low grade rocks. Now, the government has fixed this math. Ore with 35 to 45 percent iron will be priced at 75 percent of the standard rate, while even lower grades will be half price.

This change is a big deal for the environment and the economy. Thanks to new technology, engineers can now "wash" and process these low-grade stones known as BHQ and BHJ into high quality material for making steel. By making this process cheaper, the government hopes to save India's shrinking supply of high-grade iron and keep steel factories running steadily.

The new rules also include a "fair play" clause. To prevent companies from faking their data to pay lower taxes, the government clarified that royalties will be calculated right after the rocks are pulled from the ground. This ensures that the true value of the mineral is captured while still giving mining companies a reason to be scientific and efficient with every handful of earth they dig.

India's hotels to add 70,000 new rooms

NEW DELHI

India's hotel industry is preparing for a massive growth spurt. A new report reveals that listed hotel companies plan to add over 70,000 new rooms, or "keys," by the year 2030. This expansion comes as the sector shifts from simply recovering after the pandemic to becoming a mature, powerhouse industry.

The numbers tell a story of rapid wealth and travel. The hospitality market is expected to grow from $24.6 billion to roughly $31 billion by 2029. This boom is fueled by domestic travelers, who made a staggering 4.1 billion trips across India in 2025, a 40 percent jump from the previous year. Because people are earning more, they are choosing luxury, about 60 percent of new hotels opening now are in the premium or upscale categories.

Investors are also pouring money into the sector. In 2025, hotel deals reached $456 million, which is two and a half times more than the year before. Big institutional players are no longer just looking at major business hubs. Instead, they are aggressively buying property in spiritual centers, cultural sites, and popular vacation spots where there aren't enough branded hotels yet.

Despite global tensions and some hiccups in the airline industry, hotels remained busy in 2025, with average occupancy at 64 percent. As infrastructure improves across the country, experts believe this growth is just the beginning. India is quickly turning into a top destination for experience driven travel, ensuring that the thousands of new rooms being built will find plenty of guests.

Highway overload fees see major changes

NEW DELHI

Drivers on India's National Highways will face a new system of fines for carrying too much weight. The Ministry of Road Transport has launched these updated rules to protect roads from damage and make travel safer for everyone. The government wants to ensure that heavy trucks follow the law while keeping the fee collection process fair and transparent.

The new penalty system is based on how much extra weight a vehicle is carrying. If a truck is only slightly over up to 10 percent it will not be charged an extra fee. However, if the load is between 10 percent and 40 percent over the limit, the driver must pay double the standard toll rate. For those carrying massive loads more than 40 percent over the limit, the fine jumps to four times the base rate.

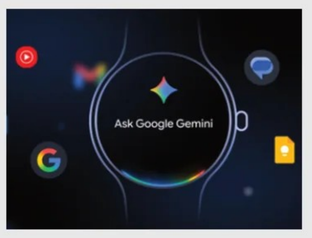
To keep things honest, these fees will be calculated using certified scales and Weigh in Motion technology installed at toll plazas. If a toll booth doesn't have a working scale, they are not allowed to charge an overload fee. Additionally, all fines must be paid through FASTag. This digital record will be sent directly to the national "VAHAN" register, creating a permanent history for every vehicle caught breaking the rules.

Google brings NEET prep to Gemini

NEW DELHI

Google has officially upgraded its Gemini AI to help the next generation of doctors. The tech giant announced the launch of full-length NEET UG practice tests, designed to give medical aspirants a realistic way to prepare for one of India's toughest competitive exams.

Students can now access these tests simply by asking Gemini to "Take a NEET mock test." These exams are built using high quality content vetted by various educational experts, ensuring the questions match the actual test's difficulty. This follows



Google's previous rollout of similar tools for JEE Main, the country's primary engineering entrance exam.

One of the biggest advantages of this new feature is the instant feedback. Once a student finishes a test, the AI analyzes their performance to highlight exactly where they are strong and where they need to study more. Students can go even deeper by asking the AI to explain complex answers or even generate a personalized study plan based on their specific scores.

Beyond just student tools, Google is also supporting teachers with new AI capabilities to help them draft assignments and summarize how their students are doing. To keep things safe and transparent, Google has included tools to help users identify AI-generated content. These updates are part of a broader mission to make high-quality exam preparation more accessible to every student in India, regardless of where they live.

Two wheeler sales drive huge March surge

NEW DELHI

India's auto industry finished the financial year with a massive bang this March. According to reports, sales across almost every type of vehicle saw double digit growth. This surge shows that Indian consumers are feeling confident and ready to spend, providing a huge boost to the country's economy.

The biggest winners were two wheelers, which saw sales jump by nearly 20 percent compared to last year. Within this group, scooters were the absolute stars, with a nearly 30 percent increase in demand. Motorcycles also grew steadily, but it was the convenience of scooters that truly captured the market this month. In total, nearly 2 million two wheelers were sold in just thirty days, marking a major milestone for the segment.

Family cars and SUVs also had a great month. Passenger vehicle sales rose by 16 percent, reaching over 4.4 lakh units. Experts say this growth is being driven by a constant stream of new models and a general recovery in how much money people have to spend. Even three wheelers, often used for public transport and small deliveries, saw a healthy 21 percent rise in sales.

While these numbers are impressive, they don't tell the whole story, as they exclude luxury brands like BMW and Mercedes-Benz. However, for the average Indian consumer, the message is clear, the road ahead looks busy. With demand rising for everything from basic scooters to high-end SUVs, the Indian auto sector is entering the new financial year with a very strong tailwind.

NEW FORM 141

New form 141 simplifies your tax filing

NEW DELHI

Tax season just got a little easier for millions of Indians. The Income Tax Department has officially launched Form 141, a new "all-in-one" document that replaces four older, confusing forms. This move is part of a major effort to cut down on paperwork and make it simpler for regular people to report their taxes correctly.

Before today, taxpayers had to juggle four different

forms like 26QB, 26QC, 26QD, and 26QE depending on whether they were buying a house, paying high rent, or trading crypto. Now, whether you are buying property worth over ₹50 lakh or paying monthly rent above ₹50,000, you will only need this single consolidated statement. It also covers large payments to contractors and even transfers of digital assets like NFTs and Bitcoin.

One big win for taxpayers is how the form handles multiple owners. Previously, if you bought a house from three different people, the paperwork was a nightmare. Now, the rules have flipped, the number of buyers decides how many forms you need. You can list multiple sellers on just one form, which analysts say will save a significant amount of time during property registrations.

The new system is also more flexible. It now allows users to skip certain registration details if the official paperwork isn't finished yet. To file, taxpayers just need to log into the e-filing portal with their PAN, fill in the details of the deal, and pay online. It is a modern step toward making Indian taxes digital and stress-free.

Chennai Super Kings defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 32 runs at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Tuesday.

McClenaghan Lauds Sakib, Hinge after Dream IPL Debuts

HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad produced a dominant all-round display to end Rajasthan Royals' four-match winning streak, securing a convincing 57-run victory in their IPL 2026 clash in Hyderabad, powered by sensational debut performances from Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain.

The two young Indian pacers combined to take eight wickets, ripping through Rajasthan Royals' batting lineup and dismantling their chase of a challenging 217. Their fearless bowling effort not only sealed SRH's victory but also showcased the emergence of promising talent in Indian cricket's fast-bowling pool.

Twenty-one-year-old Sakib Hussain set the tone early, striking in his very first over by dismissing Yashasvi Jaiswal. He continued to trouble the top order with pace variations and smart execution, removing Donovan Ferreira, Jofra Archer, and Ravi Bishnoi. Hussain finished with exceptional figures of 4 for 24, displaying control, confidence, and maturity beyond his experience.

Sunrisers Hyderabad's young pacers Sakib Hussain and Praful Hinge shine on IPL debut

Former New Zealand fast bowler Mitchell McClenaghan praised Hussain's composure and skill during a broadcast discussion on Star Sports. He noted the youngster's ability to use slower deliveries effectively and compared aspects of his bowling style to Mustafizur Rahman, highlighting how crucial his early breakthrough was in breaking Rajasthan's momentum.

At the other end, 24-year-old Praful Hinge delivered an equally impressive debut performance, earning the Player of the Match award. Hinge made an immediate impact by taking three wickets in his opening over, dismissing Vaibhav Sooryavanshi with a sharp bouncer before removing Dhruv Jurel and Lhuandre Pretorius with consistent line and length. He later returned to dismiss Rajasthan captain Riyan Parag, finishing with figures of 4 for 34.

McClenaghan lauded Hinge's adaptability and discipline, emphasising how effectively he maintained pressure in high-intensity conditions and varied his lengths with maturity rarely seen in debutants.

With this win, Sunrisers Hyderabad climbed to fourth place on the IPL 2026 points table, registering their second victory in five matches. They will next face Chennai Super Kings at home on Saturday, aiming to build momentum after this breakthrough performance from their young bowling duo.

Sanju Samson Named ICC Player of the Month after Stellar T20 WC Run

Sanju wins ICC Player of Month after T20 World Cup heroics

NEW DELHI

India's wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for March 2026 after a sensational run during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, where he played a decisive role in India's title-winning campaign.

Samson, who was not part of the regular playing XI at the start of the tournament, was drafted into the side during the Super 8 stage and immediately transformed India's middle order with explosive and composed batting performances. He began with a steady 24 against Zimbabwe before producing a match-winning unbeaten 97 against the West Indies that secured India's place in the semi-finals.

He carried his form into the knockout stages, smashing a brilliant 89 against England in the semi-final at the Wankhede Stadium. His innings set up a commanding total and gave India full control of the match. In the final, Samson once again delivered under pressure, scoring another 89 to guide India to victory and help the team successfully defend their T20 World Cup crown.

Across three crucial matches in March, Samson scored 275 runs at an average of 137.50 and maintained a strike rate close to 200, making him one of the most dominant batters of the tournament. His consistency in high-pressure situations earned him widespread praise from teammates, coaches, and cricket analysts.

Reacting to the honour, Samson said the award marked a special milestone in his career and reflected one of the most memorable phases of his journey in international cricket. He expressed gratitude to the team management for their trust and to his teammates for their support throughout the tournament.

The award is the first ICC Player of the Month recognition for Samson, further establishing him as one of the leading performers in modern T20 cricket and a key figure in India's continued success on the global stage.

Samson's breakthrough performance is being seen as a turning point in his international career, with experts praising his temperament, adaptability, and ability to deliver under pressure. His rise is expected to strengthen India's middle order further in upcoming global tournaments and bilateral series across all formats consistently rewarded.

Asian Champions League to Expand from 24 to 32 Teams in Landmark Move

KUALA LUMPUR

The Asian Champions League is set to expand from 24 to 32 teams starting next season, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced on Tuesday, describing the decision as a "landmark expansion" aimed at promoting inclusivity and excellence in club football across the continent.

The move will come into effect once it is formally approved by the AFC Executive Committee. The governing body said the expansion reflects its long-term vision to strengthen the competitiveness and commercial appeal of Asia's premier club competition, which has been rebranded as the AFC Champions League Elite since the 2024–25 season.

Under the revised format, the group stage will continue to be divided into East and West zones. However, each group will expand from 12 teams to 16 teams, significantly increasing participation from top clubs across member associations.

Despite the expansion, the overall structure of the tournament will remain broadly unchanged. The top six teams from each group will qualify directly for the Round of 16, while teams finishing from seventh to 10th place will enter a newly introduced knockout playoff round for additional qualification spots, adding more competitive opportunities and high-stakes fixtures.

The AFC said the revised system is designed to maintain elite competition standards while allowing more clubs from emerging football nations to participate at the highest level. Officials believe the change will enhance fan engagement and improve the overall quality of the tournament by offering more matches between top clubs across Asia.

Meanwhile, the current 2025–26 season of the competition is reaching its knockout phase, with the Round of 16 and quarter-final matches scheduled to be held this week in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Tim David Fined for Code Breach, Pandya Penalised for Slow Over-Rate

MUMBAI

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) all-rounder Tim David has been fined 25 per cent of his match fee and handed one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during their match against Mumbai Indians, while MI skipper Hardik Pandya has also been penalised for maintaining a slow over-rate.

The IPL, in an official statement, confirmed that David was found guilty under Article 2.4 of the league's Code of Conduct for players and team officials. The breach was categorised as a Level 1 offence after he reportedly disobeyed umpire instructions during key moments of RCB's innings.

According to the statement, David failed to comply with umpiring directives on two separate occasions. The first incident occurred in the 18th over (17.2) when the ball was being changed, and David allegedly refused to hand over the ball despite repeated instructions from on-field officials as he wished to inspect it.

The second instance took place during the 20th over (19.2), when he again did not immediately return the ball to the umpires, resulting in what the IPL described as repeated non-compliance with official instructions. The burly Australian batter, however, went on to play a quick cameo, scoring an unbeaten 34 off 16 balls, including three sixes and two fours. He has since admitted to the offence and accepted the sanction imposed by match officials.

Meanwhile, Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya was fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during the match. As this was MI's first offence of the season under Article 2.22 of the IPL Code of Conduct, Pandya was fined ₹12 lakh. The IPL noted that RCB's innings lasted just over two hours, contributing to a match affected by delays in both innings.

The contest saw multiple stoppages, with both teams experiencing extended pauses under hot and humid conditions. The first innings lasted two hours and one minute, while the second innings stretched to two hours and four minutes, prompting scrutiny over match pace and on-field discipline.

Deepti, Abhishek Lead Indian Dominance in Wisden Awards 2026

LONDON

Indian players dominated the Wisden Almanack 2026 awards, winning seven of nine honours. Deepti Sharma was named Women's Cricketer of the Year after taking 22 wickets and scoring 215 runs, helping India win their first Women's ODI World Cup. Abhishek Sharma earned T20 Cricketer of the Year with 859 runs at a strike rate of 193.

In Tests, Shubman Gill, Mohammed Siraj, Rishabh Pant, and Ravindra Jadeja were among Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year after India's 2-2 series draw in England. Gill scored 754 runs, Siraj took 23 wickets, and Pant impressed despite injury. Jadeja contributed with both bat and ball consistently, strengthening India's overall performance in tough English conditions.

Australia's Mitchell Starc and England's Haseeb Hameed were the only non-Indian winners, reflecting India's strong dominance in global cricket this year.

India's Amdavad Bid Uses Existing Facilities, Progress Impressive: CS CEO Sadleir

CHENNAI

Commonwealth Sport (CS) CEO Katie Sadleir has said India's bid for the 2030 Commonwealth Games is strongly based on the use of existing facilities in Amdavad (Ahmedabad), adding that the progress made so far is "very impressive" following a recent evaluation visit by a five-member CS delegation. Speaking after extensive discussions with representatives from the Gujarat state government, the central government, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and host city officials, Sadleir said she was highly encouraged by what she saw on the ground and confident that India could deliver a "wow Games" if preparations continue at the current pace.

She noted that many of the proposed venues are already world-class, while others require only minor upgrades, temporary structures, or refurbishments. According to her, the Indian proposal aligns with Commonwealth Sport's revised hosting philosophy, which prioritises affordability and the use of existing infrastructure rather than large-scale new construction.

Sadleir explained that this approach is part of a broader "Commonwealth Games reset" aimed at reducing hosting costs and making the event more accessible to potential host nations. She said the goal was to reduce the financial burden significantly by designing Games that fit existing infrastructure rather than requiring expensive new stadiums.

"The bid from India is very much based on using existing facilities. Some are brand new, others may need upgrades, but overall the facilities are absolutely suitable," she said, adding that multiple venues and convention centres in Amdavad have strong multi-sport potential.

She also highlighted that the delegation, which included senior CS officials and consultants, spent three days inspecting venues and found strong potential across both sporting and operational areas.

City Hilights (English Daily) published by P. Sunil Kumar (Publisher) on behalf of Immaculate Broadcasting Consortium World News (P) Ltd., No. 18, JRV Court, Queens's Road, Bengaluru – 560001 and printed at Manipal Media Network Limited Opp. Govt School, Kempalinganahalli, Near Kunigal Cross, Nelamangala TQ, Bangalore Rural Dist. -562123, Printed at No-7/2 plot no.CA-3/1,28(p)&29(p) Kapanoor 2nd Stage Industrial Area Kapnoor Village Kalaburagi -585104. Printed at S. J. R. V. Printers, No. 208 Plot No. B-019 KSSIDC Industrial Area, Irfan Ahamed Khan Pathan, 4th Main Road Gamanagatti, Hubballi-Dharwad – 580025. and Elegant Offset Printers Pvt. Ltd. No. 5-61/1, Shed No. M-6, Yeyyadi Industrial Estate, Yeyyadi, Mangalore - 575 008. (RNI No: KARENG / 2015 / 63243), Regd. No. BGGPO-2581/2017-2019 Posted at Bengaluru PSO-560026 Email - cityhilights.news@gmail.com Phone: 080-41209042. Copyright. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited.